NOONTIDE LEISURE;

OR,

SKETCHES IN SUMMER.

OUTLINES FROM NATURE AND IMAGINATION,

AND INCLUDING

A Tale of the Days of Shakspeare.

BY

NATHAN DRAKE, M.D.

AUTHOR OF LITERARY HOURS,
OF ESSAYS ON PERIODICAL LITERATURE, OF SHAKSPEARE
AND HIS TIMES, OF WINTER NIGHTS, AND
EVENINGS IN AUTUMN.

Come, sweetest SUMMER!
And o'er old Avon's magic edge,
Whence SHAKSPEARE cull'd the spiky sedge,
All playful yet, in years unripe,
To frame a shrill and simple pipe,
O Goddess, guide my pilgrim feet! WARTON

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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TO

THE LOVERS OF SHAKSPEARE,

THESE VOLUMES,

INCLUDING A NARRATIVE WHOSE

PRIMARY OBJECT HAS BEEN

TO UNFOLD ITS AUTHOR'S CONCEPTION OF THE

MORAL AND DOMESTIC FEELINGS OF

THE BARD OF AVON,

ARE INSCRIBED,

BY ONE, WHOSE ADMIRATION OF

THE PRIVATE CHARACTER OF THE POET,

FAINTLY AS IT HAS BEEN SHADOWED OUT BY

TRADITION,

IS SCARCELY TO BE EXCEEDED

BY THAT WHICH HE ENTERTAINS FOR THE

DEPTH AND UNIVERSALITY OF HIS

GENIUS AND TALENTS.

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NOONTIDE LEISURE.

No. I.

Now, while the fervid ray shoots o'er the skies,
How grateful feels the margin of the flood!
How grateful now to trace the devious course
Of some wild pastoral [illegible], that changes oft
Its varied lapse; and ever as it winds,
Enchantment follows, and new beauties rise.—
O Nature! lovely Nature! thou canst give
Delight thyself a thousand ways, and lend
To every object charms! With thee, even books
A higher relish gain. The poet's lay
Grows sweeter in the shade of wavy woods,
Or lulling lapse of crystal stream beside;
Dim umbrage lends to philosophic lore
Severer thought; and Meditation leads
Her pupil Wisdom to the green resort
Of solemn silence, her inspiring school.

BIDLAKE.

THERE is no part of a SUMMER'S DAY in the country more delightful, perhaps, to the con-

templative man, than are its NOONTIDE HOURS, provided the fervency which usually attends upon them, be sufficiently attempered by the grateful contrast of protecting shade. All nature, indeed, seems at this sultry season sunk in lassitude and repose, and an universal stillness reigns around, even deep as that which waits upon the noon of night. It is then we fly to woods, to waters, and to caves, whose comparative coolness, whilst it breathes a delicious balm through every nerve, singularly disposes the mind, not only to the full enjoyment of the scenery itself which secludes us from the blaze of day, but to the indulgence of those trains and associations of thought which spring from, and luxuriate in, the realms of fancy and meditation.

Mindful, therefore, of the soothing influence which we owe to the sheltered solitude of a *Summer's Noon*, it may prove no unpleasing task, nor one altogether void of moral instruction, should we enter somewhat minutely into a detail of the pleasures, feelings, and reflections, which a retreat of this kind is calculated to supply; more especially as relating to the impressions resulting from its *scenery*, from its

tendency to dispose the mind to *musing* and *reverie*, to the enthusiasm of *poetry*, the charms of *philosophy*, and the consolations of an enlightened *piety*.

In no circumstances, indeed, can we be placed where, from the power of contrast, the sensations springing from the gloom, the depth, and breezy coolness of aged woods and forests, are more [illegible]ted or more fully enjoyed than when the beams of a vertical sun are raging in the world around us. It is then, that in the beautiful language of Virgil; we are ready to express our eager wishes, and exclaim,

> O qui me gelidis in vallibus Hæmi
> Sistat, et ingenti ramorum protegat umbrâ!
>
> *Georg.* lib. ii. v. 488.

> Hide me, some God, where Hæmus' vales extend,
> And boundless shade and solitude defend!
>
> Sotheby.

a passage which Thomson, who studied the Roman poet with the happiest taste and emulation, adopting a wider canvass, has expanded into a picture which seems, whilst we behold it,

to breathe the very freshness of the living landscape. He is describing the hottest hours of noon:

Thrice happy he! who on the sunless side
Of a romantic mountain, forest-crown'd,
Beneath the whole collected "gloom" reclines.—
Welcome, ye shades! ye bowery thickets, hail!
Ye lofty pines! ye venerable oaks!
Ye ashes wild, resounding o'er the steep!
Delicious is your shelter to the soul,
As to the hunted hart the sallying spring,
Or stream full-flowing, that his swelling sides
Laves, as he floats along the herbag'd brink.

Summer.

If any thing were wanting to paint in yet stronger terms the intense gratification which, with other adjuncts of a similar kind, umbrage dark and deep as this affords, when Nature pants as it were beneath the dazzling deluge, no where can it be better drawn than from a sketch presented to us by Mr. Gisborne, who, in describing a peasant boy watching unsheltered his master's herd during the fervor of a summer's noon, represents him, overcome by the

sultriness of the hour, as falling asleep and dreaming of what is directly opposed to the throbbing heat which burns within his bosom. It is a delineation full of merit, and illustrated in a manner which touches some of the finest feelings of the heart.

Panting, bare-headed, and with outstretch'd arms
He sleeps; and dreams of winter's frosty gale,
Of sunless thickets, rills with breezy course,
Morn's dewy freshness, and cool rest at eve.
 So when in slumber the poor exile seeks
A pause from woe, delusive fancy's hand
Presents each object of his fond desire.
He reads the joyful summons to return;
Beholds the bark prepar'd, the swelling sail;
Hears the impatient seamen murmur; grasps
The pendent rope exulting; climbs the deck;
Skims o'er the wave, and hails his native shore.
Walks in a Forest; Noon.

It is, however, where amid the twilight of the grove or wood, we meet the lake, the cave, the gushing stream, or murmuring fountain, that our triumph over the fervors of the summer-noon becomes complete; and we are tempted to

compare our happy lot, not only with the situation of those who are necessitated to labour beneath the blaze of an European sun, but with those who are condemned to endure the tenfold horrors of a torrid clime. It is a comparison of this kind which has rendered the following lines so pre-eminently striking, especially towards the close, where the personification of thirst introduces a thought that speaks to us in the very voice of nature.

But ever against restless heat,
Bear me to the rock-arch'd seat,
O'er whose dim mouth an ivy'd oak
Hangs nodding from the low-brow'd rock;
Haunted by that chaste nymph alone,
Whose waters cleave the smoothed stone;
Which, as they gush upon the ground,
Still scatter misty dews around.
A rustic, wild, grotesque alcove,
Its sides with mantling woodbines wove;
Cool as the cave where Clio dwells,
Whence Helicon's fresh fountain wells;
Or noon-tide grot where Sylvan sleeps
In hoar Lycæum's piny steeps.
Me, Goddess, in such cavern lay,
While all without is scorch'd in day;

Sore sighs the weary swain, beneath
His with'ring hawthorn on the heath;
The drooping hedger wishes eve,
In vain, of labour short reprieve!
Meantime, on Afric's glowing sands,
Smote with keen heat the trav'ler stands:
Low sinks his heart, while round his eye
Measures the scenes that boundless lie,
Ne'er yet by foot of mortal worn,
Where Thirst, wan pilgrim, walks forlorn.
How does he wish some cooling wave
To slake his lips, or limbs to lave!
And thinks, in every whisper low,
He hears a bursting fountain flow.

WARTON.*

But not only does a retreat of this kind afford the most delicious refreshment to the languid and over-heated functions of the body, it communicates also to the intellectual powers a luxury of a still higher description, leading to those gentle thoughts and beautiful imaginings which dissipate for a time the cares and turmoils of a restless world, and woo the breast to peace and

* Ode on the Approach of Summer.

harmony. Who that has once enjoyed the tranquil blessings of an hour like this, is not ready to exclaim with the philosophic enthusiasm of Lucretius,

Si non aurea sunt juvenum simulacra per ædeis
Lampadas igniferas manibus retinentia dextris,
Lumina nocturnis epulis ut suppeditentur;
Nec domus argento fulget, auroque renidet,
Nec citharis reboant laqueata aurataque templa;
Attamen inter se, prostrati in gramine molli,
Propter aquæ rivum, sub ramis arboris altæ,
Non magnis opibus jucunde corpora curant.

Lib. ii. l. 24 ad 31.

What, though the dome be wanting, whose proud walls
A thousand lamps irradiate, propt sublime
By frolic forms of youths in massy gold,
Flinging their splendours o'er the midnight feast;
Though gold and silver blaze not o'er the board,
Nor music echo round the gaudy roof?
Yet listless laid the velvet grass along
Near gliding streams, by shadowy trees o'er-arch'd,
Such pomps we need not.

GOOD.

or to pause with delight over the picture which Gray, in the very spirit of the Roman bard, has given us of his minstrel youth "to fortune and to fame unknown."

"There at the foot of yonder nodding beech
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by."

It is the pre-disposition which scenery of this kind, and at such an hour, gives to the empire of fancy and reverie, which has rendered it so great a favourite with the lovers of poetry and romantic fiction. Relieved not only from the oppression of intolerable heat, but surrounded by the soft shadowings of a dreamy twilight, the ear, at the same time, lulled by the lapse of murmuring water, and the breezy stirrings of over-hanging foliage, imagination fleets as it were into a world of its own creation, peopling its fairy realms with all that can soothe the senses, and delight the gifted spirit, with all that legendary lore, or bardic harpings have declared in knightly hall, or ladies' bower. And such

was the enthusiasm which Milton owned, when he addressed the pensive inspirer of his earliest strains:

When the sun begins to fling
His flaring beams, me, Goddess, bring
To arched walks of twilight groves,
And shadows brown, that Sylvan loves,
Of pine, or monumental oak,
Where the rude axe, with heaved stroke,
Was never heard the Nymphs to daunt,
Or fright them from their hallow'd haunt;
There in close covert by some brook,
Where no profaner eye may look,
Hide me from day's garish eye,
While the bee with honied thigh,
That at her flowery work doth sing,
And the water's murmuring
With such consort as they keep,
Entice the dewy-feather'd sleep;
And let some strange mysterious Dream
Wave at his wings in aery stream
Of lively portraiture display'd,
Softly on my eye-lids laid;
And, as I wake, sweet musick breathe
Above, about, or underneath.

Il Penseroso.

And such too was the inspiration which Warton, one of the most eminent disciples of the school of Milton, felt, when "the sultry noon to appease," he calls for

The fairy bank, or magic lawn,
By Spenser's lavish pencil drawn:
Or bow'r in Vallombrosa's shade,
By legendary pens portray'd,

and then adds, with all the sombre and picturesque wildness of the great poet of Il Penseroso,

Haste, let me shroud from painful light,
On that hoar hill's aërial height,
In solemn state, where waving wide,
Thick pines with darkening umbrage hide
The rugged vaults, and riven tow'rs
Of that proud castle's painted bow'rs,
Whence HARDYKNUTE, a baron bold,
In Scotland's martial days of old,
Descended from the stately feast,
Begirt with many a warrior guest,
To quell the pride of Norway's king,
With quiv'ring lance and twanging string.
As thro' the caverns dim I wind,
Might I that holy legend find,

By fairies spelt in mystic rhymes,
To teach enquiring later times
What open force, or secret guile,
Dash'd into dust the solemn pile.

Ode on Summer.

Fascinating, however, and powerful as is the influence which a perfect seclusion of this kind, and at such an hour, sometimes exerts over the mind, in disposing it to indulge in the day-dreams of a poetic imagination, and the fairy shadowings of reverie, it has been found not less friendly to the abstractions of the philosopher, and the meditations of the moralist. It is in solitude and noontide silence like this, amid the awful yet soothing impressions of magnificent Nature, amid solemn groves, and age-struck woods, and falling waters, that we feel the nothingness, the utter vanity of the greater part of all human pursuits. Aloof, in short, from the contagion of a feverish world, and the reach of vulgar strife, every jarring passion sinks to rest, and life, with all its sad realities, its bearings, tendencies, and issues, is, or may be, viewed through a correct and unperturbed medium. We may, and do often, rise, in fact, from the contemplation with feelings better prepared to

encounter the necessary evils, and privations of our pilgrimage, and with a judgment which has learnt to estimate, at their just value, not only the glittering objects which attract but to delude the giddy and the thoughtless multitude, but those which, with a more imposing aspect, absorb and lead astray. the grave, the busy, and ambitious. . It was thus that Gray the most moral as well as the most pathetic and sublime of lyric poets, imbibed instruction from the noontide stillness of majestic scenery; and who that has mingled much with human society, and has a heart to be touched by the promptings of solitude, and the voiceless eloquence of nature, may not adopt his beautiful language, and say

Where'er the oak's thick branches stretch
A broader, browner shade,
Where'er the rude and moss-grown beech
O'er-canopies the glade,
Beside some water's rushy brink
With me the Muse shall sit, and think
(At ease reclin'd in rustic state)
How vain the ardour of the crowd!
How low, how little are the proud!
How indigent the great!

Ode on Spring

Nor, advancing a step still higher in the dignity and importance of the suggestions which the almost unbroken silence of the summer's noon-tide hour is calculated to convey to the mind, can we forbear remarking, that even piety and devotion may receive fresh accessions of strength and ardour from the scenes of deep and awful seclusion to which we are wont to fly, at such a season, for shelter and repose!

It is then, amidst the depths of glens and forests, at the foot of some o'erhanging rock, or within the caverned side of some stupendous mountain, where all is vast and lone, and hushed as midnight, that we seem to rise above the confines of mortality, and to commune with another world. Here, indeed, if ever, might we dare to hope for that intercourse which, in days long past, patriarchal record has ascribed to a chosen few among the sons of men pre-eminently good and wise, and who are said to have

> Convers'd with angels, and immortal forms
> On gracious errands bent,

a tradition which has furnished our amiable

Thomson with one of the most sublimely awful passages in his Seasons, where describing the noontide retreat of Summer as a favoured haunt of Meditation, and as best found beneath the canopy of embowering woods, he adds, in a strain of hallowed enthusiasm, unequalled, save by the muse of Milton,

Shook sudden from the bosom of the sky,
A thousand shapes or glide athwart the dusk,
Or stalk majestic on. Deep-rous'd, I feel
A sacred terror, a severe delight,
Creep through my mortal frame; and thus, methinks,
A voice, than human more, th' abstracted ear
Of fancy strikes: — " Be not of us afraid,
Poor kindred man! thy fellow creatures, we
From the same Parent-Power our beings drew,
The same our Lord and laws, and great pursuit.
Once, some of us, like thee, through stormy life
Toil'd, tempest-beaten, ere we could attain
This holy calm, this harmony of mind,
Where purity and peace immingle charms.
Then fear not us; but with responsive song,
Amid these dim recesses, undisturb'd
By noisy folly, and discordant vice,
Of Nature sing with us, and Nature's God.
Here frequent, at the visionary hour,

When musing midnight reigns, or silent noon,
Angelic harps are in full concert heard,
And voices chaunting from the wood-crown'd hill,
The deepening dale, or inmost sylvan glade.
A privilege bestow'd by us, alone,
On Contemplation, or the hallow'd ear
Of poet, swelling to seraphic strain." *Summer.*

Of hours thus dear to the good and wise, to the admirers of nature, the favourites of fancy, and the lovers of contemplation, we have now only to confess, that it has been our wish to avail ourselves, so far at least as may prove, that whilst enjoying the delicious coolness of retreat by fountain, wood, or stream, we have been not altogether uninfluenced by the local spirit of the scene, nor totally unbenefited by what to the shade and silence of a noonday solitude we owe, in prompting through every age and clime, some of the most beautiful and ennobling speculations of human thought and genius.

It is our hope, therefore, and has been, indeed, our aim, that the following pages, whilst they furnish some amusement for the lovers of nature, of poetry, of biography, and of romance,

should, at the same time, include what may, indirectly at least, tend to improve the morals and amend the heart; what may, in short, for those who at the noontide hour of summer

> "Are listless laid the velvet grass along."

afford that species of mental food which shall best harmonise with the season and its scenery, and with the feelings and associations which they are calculated to suggest.

No. II.

> Shakspeare unites in his existence the utmost elevation and the utmost depth ; and the most foreign, and even apparently irreconcileable properties subsist in him peaceably together. The world of spirits and nature have laid all their treasures at his feet : in strength, a demi-god ; in profundity of view, a prophet ; in all-seeing wisdom, a protecting spirit of a higher order ; he lowers himself to mortals as if unconscious of his superiority, and is as open and unassuming as a child.
>
> SCHLEGEL, *apud' Black.*

* The principal object of this narrative has been to bring forward a picture of the moral, social, and domestic life of Shakspeare in accordance with the few traits which tradition has preserved of his personal history. No one can be more aware than myself of the danger which must be incurred in venturing to introduce our immortal countryman on the living scene ; yet such has ever appeared to me, as well from the study of his writings, as from the features of his scanty biography, to be the extraordinary beauty, and almost sublime simplicity of his private character, that, notwithstanding the manifold risk attending the experiment, I have been induced to make the attempt, with the view of more fully and completely expressing my own conception of his peculiar worth in all the relations of humanity. In doing this, a portion of his literary character will, of necessity, appear, but it is sketched in subserviency to the main design.

JULIUS SHAW the master of the Falcon Inn, Stratford-upon-Avon, had just been called away from a party of friends who were recreating

Julius Shaw was a personage of considerable respectability in Stratford. He was born Sept. 1571; he married Anne Boyes, May 5th, 1594; he was chosen Bailiff of Stratford in 1615; he was a witness to Shakspeare's Will in 1616, and died at Stratford, where he was buried, June 24th, 1629. He was consequently, at the period when this narrative commences, about the age of forty-four, and seven years younger than his friend Shakspeare.

"Julius Shaw," says Mr. Ireland, speaking of the Falcon Inn, as it existed in Shakspeare's time, "was the name of the person who then kept the house, and who was a subscribing witness to our poet's Will. Shaw was by trade a carpenter and undertaker, and is supposed, with some degree of probability, the person who buried him. Shakspeare is said to have passed much time in this house, and to have had a strong partiality for the landlord, as well as for his liquor."—*Picturesque Views on the Avon*, p. 203, 204.

Whether this account can be depended upon I know not, but the tradition is sufficient for the purposes to which it is applied; for I wish it to be understood that the chief object of this narrative is to unfold my own idea of the private character of Shakspeare, to which every incident, whether originating from pure fiction or supposed fact, is held in subordination.

There were *three* Shaws existing at one time in Stratford; RALPH SHAW, a wool-driver, the father of *William* and *Julius*, and the friend of Mr. John Shakspeare; WILLIAM, the eldest son, a glover, and JULIUS, the youngest, the personage whose agency I have introduced at the commencement of this tale.—Vide MALONE's *Shakspeare*, apud Boswell, vol. ii. p. 79. 547. 554, and 609.

themselves in his orchard bower on the evening of the 9th of June, 1615, when his attention was diverted from the business on which he had been summoned, by a crowd assembling at his door. On stepping forward to enquire into what had brought them together, he perceived at a little distance, some peasantry approaching, and carrying a kind of frame or bier, on which lay extended the body of a man. This was preceded by an aged servant, well mounted, and leading a blood mare; whilst followed close behind, on a grey palfrey, and evidently in great distress of mind, a young lady of the most interesting features and person.

An accident, he was told, had happened to a gentleman on the road. He had been thrown from his horse, within a few miles of Stratford, and, having been seriously injured, they were bringing him to the Falcon, as the nearest place of public accommodation. Scarcely had he received this account, when the sufferer reached his gates; and Shaw, who possessed a large share of humanity, together with an active and intelligent mind, instantly issued his orders, in the execution of which, he himself took a pro-

minent part of whatever could tend to the comfort and welfare of his unfortunate guest.

The bustle and concourse to which this occurrence had given rise, soon attracted the attention of one who has since deservedly been placed foremost in the ranks of human genius; for immediately opposite the hostelry of Julius Shaw was New Place, the then residence of our immortal Shakspeare!

The bard, who was amusing himself in his garden with his little grand-daughter, Elizabeth Hall, a beautiful girl about seven years of age, surprised by the unusual noise and number of voices which seemed to issue from the immediate neighbourhood, hastened into the house, but not meeting with any satisfactory explanation of the cause, either there, or from those who stood thickly congregated near his door, he sent over to the Falçon, requesting that Shaw, with whom, as a man of great good humour and more than common talent, he was on terms of intimacy, would let him know what had happened to occasion such a crowd in the street.

The servant, however, had scarcely left the door, when the message was superseded by the

arrival of Shaw himself, who, as soon as he had seen the unfortunate gentleman placed upon a bed, and had made some enquiries into the origin and nature of the accident, and into the quality of his guests, had hurried over to New Place to consult with Shakspeare, his adviser and oracle on every momentous occasion, as to what steps he should next pursue.

"Well, mine host," exclaimed the bard as the anxious Innkeeper entered the room, "whence comes this hubbub at your gates? I am afraid, from your countenance, that something unpleasant has happened at the Falcon."

"I cannot say that it has happened there, Master Shakspeare; but a marvellous bad accident has befallen a very worthy-looking gentleman, and he now lies in extremity at my house. He has been thrown from his horse, and so much bruised, and otherwise hurt, that I am in doubt if it will go well with him; and his daughter, as beautiful a young creature as even your fancy, I will venture to say, Master Shakspeare, ever formed, takes on at such a rate, that it grieves my heart to see her; and there is the

old grey headed servant, too, wringing his hands, and lamenting so bitterly."

"Run, my good Shaw," interrupted the humane bard, "run and tell my son-in-law to hasten to your house immediately; and in the interim, I will step over, and see what can be done on my part."

It need scarcely be mentioned to my readers that the person thus sent for was Dr Hall, who had married in 1607, Shakspeare's eldest daughter, Susanna, and who was held in considerable estimation as a physician of celebrity and skill.

His destined patient, however, was fast recovering from the death-like stupor into which he had been thrown by the violence of the fall. He had recognised his daughter, who was hanging over him in an agony of grief and apprehension, and the words "My dearest Helen," had just escaped his lips, when the name of Shakspeare was announced; a name which even under the conflicting struggles of returning life, seemed not to have lost its powers of excitement, for the languid eyes of the sufferer were instantly directed towards the door of the apartment, and whilst one hand grasped that of his beloved

daughter, with the energy of parental love, the other was tremulously extended towards the approaching figure of the bard.

Shakspeare on the stage, and, as far as his works had hitherto issued from the press, in the closet also, had long been an object of the warmest admiration to Eustace Montchensey, for such was the name of the individual who now lay stretched upon the bed of pain, and whose intention it had been, if the accident which we have recorded as occurring a few miles short of Stratford had not intervened, to have called upon the poet; for he was on his way from London to his seat in Derbyshire, and had lately learnt that our bard, having finally quitted the metropolis, had sought retirement in his native town.

There wanted but the opportunity of a personal interview with Shakspeare, to love the man as much as his works; for Nature had impressed upon his countenance not only what was great and intellectual, but what was in the highest degree lovely and engaging; and more especially on this occasion were his features and manner so entirely the index of his heart, that

as he drew near to take the hand of Montchensey, and before a word had escaped his lips, misery had lost half its load from the conscious presence of kindness and compassion.

"I am come, Sir," uttered the benevolent bard, in a tone tremulous through emotion, for the distress of the young and innocent Helen had awakened his most painful sympathy, "I am come to offer you the accommodation of my house; it is but a step hence; for though I entertain a high opinion of the care and attention of mine host here, yet a place like this is ill calculated for the quiet which your situation demands. My wife will assist this young lady in nursing you; we will have a physician immediately; indeed, I have sent for one already, and if he sees no objection, we will have you removed instantly."

All this was said with such unaffected tenderness, so evidently did it flow from the noblest simplicity, and benevolent greatness of character, that Helen Montchensey, unable to repress the mingled emotions of gratitude and admiration which were swelling at her bosom, almost

unconsciously threw herself at the feet of her visitor, and bathed them with her tears.

"My dear young lady," cried the astonished Shakspeare, "kneel not to me, I am doing but what the common offices of humanity require; and happy, I do assure you, if I may, perchance, be instrumental towards the preservation of your father's life."

It was at this moment that the door opening, presented Dr. Hall to their view, a man of strong talent and much philanthropy; and who, from the scene thus unexpectedly brought before him, soon felt deeply interested in the welfare of Montchensey and his daughter. He had, fortunately, from the detail which Shaw had given him, taken care to come accompanied by a surgeon of the name of Court *, and whom he now directed to bleed his patient copiously, at the same time assuring the agitated and almost sinking Helen, that as far as he could at present judge, her father was likely to do well; adding, however, that rest and quietude were essential

* A gentleman of this name was at that time practising as a surgeon at Stratford.

to his recovery. "It was on this very account Doctor," observed Shakspeare, "that I have been recommending my house to Mr. Montchensey, and I trust, that the injunction you have now given, will induce him to accept the offer."

"How can I sufficiently thank you, my noble friend," faintly articulated Montchensey, as the abstraction of blood was rapidly relieving his pain and difficulty of breathing, "how can I sufficiently thank you for this unlooked-for kindness!" Here, however, the tide of acknowledgment, which was about to flow with more energy than was consistent with the safety of his patient, was interrupted by Dr. Hall; when Helen, turning upon our gentle bard one of those ardent looks of gratitude and intense feeling, to which no language can do justice, tremulously, though somewhat rapturously, exclaimed, "Let me then supply the place of my dear father, Sir, and say, that to be thus indebted will, I am certain, prove the most heart-soothing recollection of our lives."

"You are a skilful flatterer, my lovely lady," returned the poet smiling, "and I almost begin

to fear that, old as I am, I am incautiously placing myself within the reach of danger; but I am willing, nevertheless, to endure the hazard, and therefore hope that Dr. Hall will not object to the immediate removal of his patient."

"I must say," replied the Doctor, "that I think such a step would not be advisable to-night; but if Mr. Montchensey, from the operation he has now undergone, and from what I shall order for him, should prove, as I have little doubt will be the case, much better in the morning, I shall then, certainly, as the distance is so trifling, not venture to oppose your arrangement."

"Be it so," rejoined the bard "and now, my worthy friends," he added, "leaving you under the further direction of your kind physician, I heartily wish you a good night, trusting that nothing will occur to prevent your safe lodgment under my roof in the morning."

Mine host, and the old grey-headed groom, were at the foot of the stairs as Shakspeare descended from the chamber of Montchensey. "Here is Peter, Sir," cried Shaw, "so sorely distressed about his master and young mistress,

that I promised to see you about them; we have been waiting on this spot for some time, to catch a sight of you, and I shall be mainly glad, for his sake, if you can give us any comfortable tidings of the poor gentleman."

There was that, indeed, in the time-worn but speaking countenance of the aged domestic, which was well fitted to attract attention; for it was, on this occasion, in a very high degree indicative of fidelity and attachment: "If I lose my master, Sir, he exclaimed, my next sad duty will be to follow my dear young lady to her grave, and then, the sooner I am laid in the kirk-yard myself the better."

"Be of good cheer, my friend," replied his kind auditor, "for your master is, I trust, recovering fast. To-morrow he will be under my roof, and you and I, Peter, and your young mistress will nurse him and take care of him until he gets well." Tears of gratitude gushed from the brightening eyes of the old man; whilst Shakspeare, turning to the honest landlord of the Falcon, added, "As for you, mine host, I think I know you sufficiently to believe that you will not murmur at the motives which induce

me to rob you for a season of your guest; and I request you, therefore, to tell Dr. Hall, when he leaves his patient, that I will thank him to step over to New-Place for a few minutes before he returns home."

With a heart satisfied as to the part he had performed, Shakspeare re-entered his dwelling, and hastened to acquaint his wife with the company he had reason to expect on the following day. With her and his daughter Judith, and the little Elizabeth, he now found Mrs. Hall, who, having heard from Shaw an account of the accident, and likewise understood that her father had interested himself in behalf of the strangers, was anxious, more especially as her husband was detained longer than she expected, to learn further particulars.

"And who, my dear Sir," said Mrs. Hall, as her father entered the room, "is this unfortunate gentleman? for, from the description, imperfect as it was, which I received from Shaw, I cannot help feeling much both for him and his daughter." "His name," replied the bard, "is Montchensey, and it is one of which I have a faint recollection as somehow or other con-

nected, though many years ago, with the concerns of my unhappy friend, Raymond Neville; but we shall soon be in a way to obtain further information, for I have been so greatly struck with the appearance and manner both of him and his child, that I have asked them to make New-Place their home, until the former shall have sufficiently recovered to be able to pursue his journey. They will be here," he continued, turning to Mrs. Shakspeare, "to-morrow morning; and I am pretty certain, from the little I have already seen of Helen Montchensey, that you, Susanna," addressing Mrs. Hall, "will be delighted with her, so much is there of filial tenderness and guileless simplicity in all she says and does. Indeed I may venture to say, from the strong and heart-felt interest which their aged servant seems to take in their behalf, that our promised guests will, in all likelihood, prove characters of no common value; for I have ever found the attachment of a long-tried domestic an almost unerring index of the moral worth of the master. But I perceive," he added, "that your husband is crossing over the way, and it is probable, from the extensive knowledge which

his profession gives him of the families in this and the neighbouring counties, that he may throw some light on the subject of our enquiry."

"I can only say," replied the Doctor, taking his chair, "that our newly-acquired friend, Eustace Montchensey is, I understand, a man of considerable property in Derbyshire; that he lives in a very ancient manor-house on the banks of the Wye, and that, notwithstanding some peculiar traits in his character, and some singular occurrences in his family history, the particulars of which are said to be mixed up with no little mystery and contrariety of report, he is held by his neighbours in high respect and esteem. Beyond this I cannot go, but the accident which has now occurred, and which I am happy to say is not likely to be attended with any serious consequences, will, doubtless, in a short time render us familiar, not only with the characters of him and his daughter, who, by the by, is one of the most pleasing young women I have lately seen, but, in all probability, with some portion too of their domestic history."

With this communication, scanty as it was, though at the same time calculated to excite

considerable curiosity, were the ladies of the party, for the present, compelled to be satisfied; consoling themselves with the reflection just suggested, that in a little time they should have ample opportunities of observing and judging for themselves. Soon after this, Dr. Hall and and his lady took their leave, after promising to be at New-Place early on the next day.

The morning rose bright and lovely, and immediately after breakfast Shakspeare, accompanied by his son-in-law, stepped over to the Falcon. They were received by Helen Montchensey with a smile, which told them, more emphatically than words could have done, that all was well; and, accordingly, Dr. Hall, on returning from the chamber of his patient, declared, that he thought him sufficiently recovered to venture on a removal.

With the assistance, therefore, of Peter, and the worthy landlord of the Falcon, Montchensey soon found himself securely lodged beneath a roof which he had often wished, and as often purposed to visit, though he had little calculated on an introduction to it in any manner approaching that to which he was now under the neces-

city of submitting. It was precisely the one, however, best adapted as it proved, to furnish him with the opportunity he had so long coveted, that of being placed in a situation to study the heart and habitudes of the man who more than any other individual, had stamped on his mind the conception of great and universal genius.*

It may readily be conceived that he who could thus estimate the talents of our poet, was him-

* It may, perhaps, be thought, that for the early period in which my story is laid, I have attributed to Montchensey, throughout this narrative, too critical and discriminative an admiration for the dramatic talents of Shakspeare. But, I am persuaded, the picture is not overcharged; for though a *just* appreciation of the genius of Shakspeare was by no means so general and extended in the reign of James as in these our own days, yet were there several exalted spirits among the contemporaries of the poet, who fully and critically knew the incomparable value of their countryman, and expressed their estimate too of his poetical character in terms which have not since been surpassed, if equalled; and I would particularly mention as instances of this, the poem of Ben Jonson, and the verses to which the initials J. M. S. are annexed, commencing " A mind reflecting ages past." This latter production, which was first prefixed to the folio of 1632, I have already noticed with high commendation in my " Shakspeare and his Times," vol. ii. p. 545. et seq: and I must say, that I think it beyond all competition, the most powerful, comprehensive, and splendid poetical encomium on our immortal bard which has yet been produced.

self no ordinary character; and, indeed, there were few men who, either as to person, feature, or manner, more decidedly possessed the power of seizing and fixing attention.

Eustace Montchensey, the descendant of an ancient family in Derbyshire, was now in his forty-first year; but misfortune, and the current of acute feeling, had given to his features the appearance of more advanced life. In his form he was graceful and commanding, though thin and tall, while the lustre of a dark and penetrating eye was tempered by the pallor of his cheek, and by the expression on his countenance of a deep and rooted sorrow. At times, indeed, and when only in the presence of his daughter, the anxiety which had so long preyed upon his spirits, assumed the darker tone of anguish, and, apparently, of remorse; but a strong and highly cultivated intellect, an enthusiastic love for literature and the fine arts, and, above all, an ardent affection for his daughter, the lovely and amiable Helen, had hitherto contributed to mitigate and repress what might otherwise have proved too powerful for the integrity of his mind, or the vigour of his constitution.

In Helen Montchensey, indeed, he possessed all that parental fondness could have wished for. She was now of that age when female loveliness is most attractive, having just completed her eighteenth year, and an object, in fact, more interesting to the eye or to the heart, could seldom be contemplated. It was not, however, to mere beauty of form and symmetry of feature, though she possessed these in a remarkable degree, that she was indebted for that influence over the feelings which even the casual observer felt and acknowledged as a species of fascination. There was in the dewy light of her soft blue eyes, shaded as they were by long and pensile lashes; in the smile just breaking from her opening lips, in the delicate and ever-varying bloom that seemed to live and die upon her cheek; in the oval contour and entire cast of her countenance, partially, and ever gracefully veiled by falling ringlets of light brown hair, an expression of sweetness and simplicity, which, mingled, as it seemed to be, with the tenderest touches of melancholy and resignation, not even the most callous mind could long resist.

If such, from outward appearance and cursory

observation, was the interest excited by Montchensey and his daughter, greatly was it augmented by a more intimate knowledge of their dispositions and modes of thinking; nor could Shakspeare, who possessed what might be termed an almost intuitive perception of character, be many days in the society of his guests without forming a pretty accurate judgment of their merits and defects, both in a mental and a moral light.

The temporary indisposition, indeed, of Montchensey, which confined him to his chamber for the first few days of his residence at New-Place, not only contributed to unveil some features of his character which had otherwise lain long concealed from every eye save that of his daughter, but placed also the filial love and affectionate temper of Helen in the most prominent point of view. Pain and languor, and the intimation which they so forcibly press on the mind of the perishable tenure of our being here, will frequently relax the most guarded caution; and to Shakspeare, who was daily admitted to the bed-side of his newly-acquired friend, it soon became evident, that, notwithstanding every

effort to subdue what was passing within, there was something at the heart of Montchensey which marred its peace, and which would every now and then suddenly and unexpectedly reveal itself by transient starts of horror. It was at these moments, too, that the interest of the scene became doubled, by the expression of love and pity, and apprehension, which agitated the features of the shuddering Hèlen.

As the health and strength, however, of Montchensey improved, these aberrations became less perceptible, and the whole interest of the situation in which he had been so singularly placed, began to kindle up an enthusiasm, before which the customary depression of his spirits seemed gradually to fade away. Shakspeare, indeed, with a kindness and attention that even in an ordinary character would have availed much, but which, as coming from him, and operating on such a mind as Montchensey's, was fitted to achieve wonders, used every endeavour to lighten the gloom which appeared, at intervals, so darkly to overshadow the prospects of his guest.

It was on the eighth morning of his residence at New-Place, that Montchensey, though still

somewhat lame, and occasionally suffering much pain, ventured, with the permission of his friendly physician, Dr. Hall, to leave his chamber. On reaching the vestibule, he was shown by a servant into the library, with information that his master, who was at present engaged, would be with him in a short time.

This room, which Shakspeare called his own, had, together with an eastern aspect, a pleasant look out into the garden, and was very neatly fitted up in the Gothic style, with carved oaken presses well stored with books, of which the leaves *, and not the backs, being placed in front, and these decorated with silken strings, and occasionally with gold and silver clasps, in order to confine the sides of the covers, not only contrasted well with the dark hue of the oak, but gave a light and cheerful appearance to the apartment. Over the mantle-piece, which was of the same material as the presses, massy, and richly sculptured into flowers, hung a portrait, in oil colours, of Lord Southampton, by

* For a more minute account of the mode of arranging and decorating books in a library, at this period, see "Shakspeare and his Times," vol. i. p. 436.

Cornelius Jansen; and on the side opposite the fire-place, and immediately over a very old and curious cabinet of walnut-tree wood, were two pictures of Chaucer and Spenser. A beautiful though somewhat ponderous desk, inlaid with ebony and silver, and which had been a present to the poet from his noble and munificent patron, together with a high-backed arm-chair of rather cumbrous workmanship, with a triangular seat and cushion, and a few other chairs of similar form, but smaller dimensions, completed the furniture of the room, the floor of which was strewed with rushes, whilst in the hearth of the ample chimney stood an antique vase of sweet-scented shrubs.

Montchensey, with an eagerness and curiosity proportioned to the admiration which he felt for the owner of this apartment, almost immediately commenced a survey of its literary contents, and was astonished to perceive how rich and ample were its stores, not only in the departments of Poetry and Romance, where he had expected to find a large and curious fund, but in those of History, Biography, and Criticism; and such were the intimations in nearly every

volume which he examined, of its having been placed there not for ostentation, but for use, that the variety and extent of Shakspeare's reading appeared to him, taking into consideration how busy had been the tenor of his past life, almost as extraordinary as the depth and originality of his genius.

Whilst thus engaged, and at the moment occupied in turning over a copy of the English *Gesta Romanorum:* of Richard Robinson, the bard of Avon entered; and here we may be allowed to introduce the sketch which Montchensey, in writing shortly afterwards to a friend in town, gave of the personal appearance of the poet on this occasion. "Pain and sickness," he observes, "had hitherto disinclined me, notwithstanding all my enthusiasm on the subject, for any very critical consideration of the features and person of the bard; but on this auspicious morning, comparatively free from suffering, and animated by the scene around me, I felt an eager and anticipated delight in the opportunity I was about to enjoy, not only of contemplating, under more favourable circumstances as to myself, the manners and person of

my generous host, but of unburthening my heart of the deep and almost overwhelming sense which it entertained of his kindness and benevolence. Conceive then, my dear Charles, for I know thou art an admirer, almost as ardent as myself, of the author of *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, conceive the door of this interesting little study opening, and Shakspeare coming forward with a smile of the most fascinating good humour, to congratulate your friend on his recovery. There was, indeed, an expression of so much sweetness and benignity in his features, that I thought I had never beheld a more interesting countenance. You will tell me this was partly owing to irresistible prepossession in his favour; it may have been so; but I will endeavour to be more particular. He appeared to me in height about the middle size, not corpulent, but rather full in his person, which, notwithstanding he is in his fifty-second year, may be still justly termed handsome, as well as correctly and finely formed. His forehead, high and unusually ample in its dimensions, is nobly expanded, and his hair, which is thinly scattered on the top of his head, clusters thickly about his temples and neck, and

is of a beautiful auburn colour. His eyes, in a most remarkable degree pleasing in their expression, yet, at the same time, profoundly indicatory of the mighty mind within, are of a light and lively hazel, with brows that form nearly a complete arch. To this description, if I add the undulating outline of the nose, the dimpled expression of the cheeks, the perfect symmetry of the mouth, and the open sweetness of the lips, you may form to yourself a pretty accurate picture of the bard, more especially when I further remark, that the contour of his face is oval, the upper lip surmounted by a mustachio with the extremities slightly elevated, and the chin covered by a pointed beard. It may be necessary, also, in order to render my portrait more striking, to say something of his dress, which, at this morning's interview, consisted of a loose black gown, or tabard, without sleeves, a rich doublet of scarlet cloth, hose of dark grey, and boots or buskins of russet-coloured leather." *

* I have endeavoured, both in this instance, and in every other, during the course of the narrative, which admits of any appeal to record or tradition, to adhere with scrupulous accu-

Such was the minute representation which Montchensey, who fixed the highest value on every thing connected with the name of Shakspeare, transmitted to his friend of the features and person of the bard, as he appeared to him on entering his library at New-Place on this memorable morning.

There was something, indeed, so frank, and disengaged, and, at the same time, so perfectly cordial and unaffected, both in the looks and language of Shakspeare, not only on this occasion, but in all his intercourse with those for whom he felt any regard, that it was scarcely possible for any individual so circumstanced, not to feel easy and assured in his society. As soon, therefore, as Montchensey had expressed in a more full and energetic manner than he had hitherto been able to do, his deep sense of

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racy to what has been left us with regard to costume, dress, or personal features. Thus, the tabard and doublet which I have given to Shakspeare, are exactly those in which he appeared on his monument at Stratford, previous to its being washed with a stone colour. It should also be recollected, that male attire in the reign of James the First, was, in order to please the taste of that monarch, singularly showy.

the kindness which he had experienced beneath his roof, in doing which, however, he had to encounter several good humoured attempts at interruption from his friendly host, then pointing to the well-laden shelves which surrounded him, "I have been amusing myself during your absence," he said, "in turning over a few of the many very curious and valuable volumes which, in history, poetry, and romantic fiction, you have been so fortunate as to get together; and astonished I am, I must confess, when I recollect how entirely your time has been occupied, and from a very early period, too, by the stage, both as an actor, manager, and poet, to find you have been not only a copious collector, but likewise a very diligent reader."

"Your surprise will be diminished," returned the poet with a smile, "when you shall perceive that, with the exception of a very few books in French and Italian, the whole of this collection travels not beyond our native tongue. Time has not been spared me to cultivate what little knowledge I obtained at school of the learned languages; and, thanks to the crowd of translators who honoured the reign of our great and glori-

ous Elizabeth, the wealth of Greece and Rome, as far, at least, as fact and incident are concerned, has been laid at my feet. Rich I am, indeed, in poetry and fiction; the drama, as far as it has been open to my researches here and elsewhere, you would, of course, expect to meet, and I must acknowledge a warm partiality, not only for the long-spun details of our honest chroniclers, of which I can boast an abundant store, but for the wonders of Romance, and the legends of our popular minstrelsy; the latter more especially, under all its forms of song and ballad, I have been anxious to collect, as affording, together with the Italian tale, now so familiar to our ears, some of the best materials for dramatic fable, and possessing, at the same time, in a degree nearly peculiar to itself, a simplicity the most lovely and engaging."

"'There is one deficiency, however, in your library," remarked Montchensey, "which you must allow me to point out, as it is one which I cannot reflect upon without singular regret. Here and there, scattered, and almost hidden as it were, with peculiar negligence, among materials of far inferior value, I have been able to

detect a few of your own admirable productions; but why do you not, my friend, retired as you now are from the bustle and competition of a London life, give us a collected, and what I will not hesitate to say is much wanted, a corrected edition of your dramas? Not only are the quarto copies we possess, printed in such a manner as to convince me they have had not a particle of your superintendence; but a number of plays, of which, I am persuaded, you have scarcely written a line, have been brought on the stage as yours, and even published with your name!"

"It is very true," replied the bard with a somewhat jocular air, "and I must be content, I am afraid, like many a greater man, to father what does not strictly belong to me. But, indeed, my good friend, whilst I heartily thank you for your kind anxiety about the fate of my productions, I must at the same time confess, that I have never yet dreamt of doing what you have suggested. The fact is, the pieces you allude to have more than answered my expectations; for they have not only procured me a bare subsistence, one of the chief objects for

which they were *at first* written, but they have likewise obtained me the applause and good-will of my contemporaries, the patronage and friendship of several great and good men, and a competency for life. What may be their lot when I am dead and gone, and no longer here to give them countenance, I have scarcely yet ventured to enquire; for though I will not be weak enough to pretend an ignorance of their occasional merits, I am too conscious of their numerous errors and defects to suppose that posterity will trouble their heads much about them."

"Indeed, indeed, my noble host," rejoined Montchensey, kindling into unusual animation as he spoke, "you much too lightly estimate the value of your own works. Without arrogating to myself any deep insight into futurity, I think I may venture to predict, that a day will arrive when this inattention of yours will be a theme of universal regret."

"Say you so, my kind critic?" returned his somewhat astonished auditor, his mind momentarily sinking into reverie, whilst his eye flashed at the same instant with an intelligence

that seemed penetrating the secrets of time; "Say you so," he repeated; then starting as it were from the vision before him, he added in a more subdued tone, and with a look in which the most benevolent sweetness was yet mingled with a portion of subsiding enthusiasm, "if life and health be vouchsafed me, I will endeavour not to forget your suggestion. It is, indeed, but too true that much has been given to me, both on the stage, and from the press, which I have never written, and much too has been sacrificed on my part, the necessary penalty of my profession, to please the popular ear; and for all which, I must likewise allow, the bare process of omission would be a ready cure. But the attempt, to meet the evil as it should be met, is not just now in my power; for a great part of what I have produced is still the property of the theatre, and though my late fellows, Heminge and Condell, would, I have no doubt, do what they could to further my wishes, yet neither does the matter rest entirely on their shoulders, nor would their co-partners, and the stationers connected with them, relinquish, at the present period, their share of the expected profits, without

a compensation too extravagant for me to think of. Yet a time may come when I shall more easily regain the control over my own offspring which I have now lost; and if it should not, you will recollect that I am no critic like my friend Ben Jonson; that, with the exception of his plays, mine partake but a common fate with those of my contemporaries, and that, moreover, it is very probable the revision you wish for, should it pass, as in all likelihood it would, beyond the mere measure of blotting out, might in many instances injure the effect of what had been happily produced in the careless fervour of the moment. Besides, I must freely confess to you, that retirement from the stage and all its concerns has long been a favourite object with me. My life has been one of bustle and fatigue, and, occasionally of gaiety and dissipation, as an actor, I never felt myself sufficiently important to be fond of the occupation, and though the hours spent in composition were attended with pleasures great and peculiar to themselves, and have been abundantly rewarded by the public, I may, I think, without any charge of ingra-

titude, be permitted to remark, that even in this way I have done enough."

Montchensey was about to express in very strong terms his regret at this determination, when a slender voice at the door, accompanied by a gentle rap, interrupted the conversation, and Shakspeare, starting from his seat, caught his little grandchild in his arms, and, turning to his companion, exclaimed, "It is here, Sir, in the bosom of my family, and aloof from all that may interfere with domestic comfort, and the society of a few old friends whom time has spared me, that I hope to spend the remainder of my days." Then kissing the little Elizabeth, who had been sent to say that dinner was nearly ready, he dismissed the child, and proposed an attendance upon the ladies.

It was, in fact, on the stroke of twelve, for Montchensey, as an invalid, had spent the greater part of the morning in his chamber, and at the period of which we write, this was esteemed a late, and, therefore, a fashionable time for dinner, which in the days of the Queen had been usually taken an hour sooner.

They found Mrs. Shakspeare, Mrs. Hall, Judith Shakspeare, and Helen Montchensey assembled to receive them. They were momentarily expecting the arrival of Dr. Hall. And here we may be allowed the opportunity of inserting a slight sketch of New-Place and its inhabitants, as drawn by the lively pen of Helen Montchensey, in a letter addressed to one of her favourite and earliest companions.

"You will have heard, my beloved Agnes," she writes, "from my father's letter to your uncle, of the accident which has detained us in this place, and of our introduction to New-Place, the residence of our great dramatic bard, William Shakspeare. But as my father's enthusiasm in every thing which personally relates to this incomparable man, has, I well know, from the necessarily brief limits of such a communication, confined his epistle nearly, if not altogether, to a delineation of the features and manners of his kind host, I will now endeavour to complete the picture, and to satisfy your curiosity, by a description both of the poet's house and his family, omitting, of course, every thing you

have already obtained from the letter to your uncle.

"New-Place then, originally built, I understand, in the reign of Henry the Seventh, owes its modern and handsome appearance to its present possessor, who, though he purchased it more than twenty years ago, has only very lately, from his engagements in London, been able to reside in it. It is, with the exception of the College, a mansion belonging to a family of the name of Combe, the best and largest house in Stratford, and is situated in the principal street.

"A porch, supported by two pillars on a base of three steps, and having its architrave, as masons term this part of a building, decorated with the poet's arms, conducts you to the house, which is now distinguished from most in the town by being fronted entirely of brick, instead of brick and timber, its former state, and possessing the additional ornament of stone coigns. The windows, which are light and large, and what builders call *bays* in respect of form, are five in number, one over the porch, and two,

ranging one above the other, on each side of it; whilst surmounting the cornice, and occupying the greater part of the front roof, are three gables, or triangular uprights, with a window in each.

"I am afraid you will laugh, my dear Agnes, at the minuteness of this architectural detail; but you must prepare yourself, I do assure you, in spite of all the ridicule I may incur by the attempt, to endure a still more minute depictment, as well of the interior of the mansion, as of its tenants; for I have caught, I will allow, no small portion of my father's admiration for his poetical friends; and I do verily begin to believe, as he firmly assures me, that however careless the present age may be as to the personal history of the bard, a time will come, when, from the acknowledged superiority of his genius, every the most trifling anecdote concerning him and his connections will be sought after with avidity. I am the more willing to credit and encourage this tone of enthusiasm, as not only does my love for the writings of Shakspeare, which, under the influence of my father, I have imbibed even from my very childhood, induce me to cherish

such an expectation, but I have now the strong additional motive of a personal acquaintance with the poet, to bind the impression on my heart. For I solemnly protest to you, my sweet Agnes, that I do not think a more amiable or benevolent being exists than the author of 'Romeo and Juliet,' a declaration which, as I know how greatly you admire that play, will, I am sure, delight you. In no respect, indeed, does he arrogate to himself any deference or distinction; in fact, he appears to me perfectly unconscious of the magnitude and universality of his own genius; and so cheerful is he in his temper, so utterly void of stiffness and constraint in all he says and does; in one word, so truly and entirely the *gentleman*, in the best and noblest sense of the term, that I scarcely think it possible, even for the most young and lively, to be much in his company without entertaining an affection for him. You will not be surprised, therefore, to learn, that in this his native town and neighbourhood, he is an object of love and esteem to all classes, to grave and gay, to rich and poor; and that, of course, nine times out of ten, as might be expected from the fascination

of his manners, the splendour of the poet is almost forgotten in attachment to the man.

"If any further motive were wanting on my part, my Agnes, for a more than common admiration of the genius and character of Shakspeare, it would be from the consideration of the happy influence of both over the spirits of my poor father, whose domestic sorrows, you well know, have been such as greatly, and, I fear, permanently, to injure his health. I have not for years seen him so cheerful and abstracted from care, notwithstanding the pain arising from his accident, as since he has been a resident at New-Place; and deeply, indeed, shall I feel indebted to the bard, if, by the goodness of Providence, he should prove instrumental towards the restoration of my father's peace of mind; for I should have told you, my love, that vivacious and full of humour as is the general cast of Shakspeare's temper, and much as we have heard of the frolic achievements of his younger days, and much as he must necessarily have mixed with the gayest spirits of the age, he is yet, I am well assured, by those who know him best, as remarkable for the piety as

for the cheerfulness of his disposition, a feature in his character which, connected, as it is, with great and acknowledged splendour of talent, cannot fail to give him an almost irresistible influence over the perturbations of sorrow, or the conscience-stricken feelings of remorse.

"Under these powerful incentives to the love and veneration of our host, you will not, I am persuaded, be surprised at the importance which I attach to every thing connected with himself or his friends; nor that I threaten to resume in my next letter the very minute sketch which I have attempted to begin in this, of the poet's house and family. I feel, indeed, and I pray you to pardon the presumption of such an idea, as if he were, somehow or other, associated with the destiny of our house; a belief which has originated, I have no doubt, in the very beneficial effect which his society appears to have produced on the thoughts and prospects of my father.

"I will only add, that nothing has transpired since we left the Hall, with regard to poor Hubert Grey, on whose account, as you well

know, I have suffered, and still suffer, so many unhappy moments. Farewell, my beloved Agnes, I pray to God to have you in his good keeping: soon shall you hear again from

"Your affectionate

"HELEN MONTCHENSEY."

(*To be continued.*)

No. III.

Avon, thy rural views, thy pastures wild,
The willows that o'erhang thy twilight edge,
Their boughs entangling with th' embattled sedge;
Thy brink with watery foliage quaintly fringed,
Thy surface with reflected verdure tinged;
Soothe me with many a pensive pleasure mild,
Whilst still I muse, that here the bard divine,
Whose sacred dust yon high arch'd iles inclose,
Where the tall windows rise in stately rows
Above th' embowering shade,
Here first, at Fancy's fairy-circled shrine,
Of daisies pied his infant offering made.

WARTON.

It was not long before Helen Montchensey fulfilled the promise which she had made to her friend, and resumed the description of New-Place so circumstantially commenced in her former letter.

"You will recollect, my sweet Agnes," she continues, "that I left you in my last on the

threshold of the poet's house; and I shall now open my picture of the interior, by recalling to your remembrance my father's account of his interview with Shakspeare in his library, as it was the first day on which, owing to his indisposition, and my close attendance upon him in his chamber, that we had an opportunity of dining with the family below.

"I was ushered, on reaching the vestibule, into a handsome room, situated on the left of the porch as you enter the house; it was hung with rich tapestry, representing the Defeat of the Spanish Armada, and the floor was strewed with some of the finest rushes I have ever seen; whilst in the chimney and bay window were placed, in profusion, a variety of sweet smelling herbs and flowers. Immediately opposite the door stands a large cypress chest of great beauty, elevated on lofty feet, and curiously embossed on the top and sides with scroll-work, and emblematical devices. The chairs are cane-backed with Turkey cushions of the newest fashion, and over the chimney-piece, in frame work richly carved, is a portrait, by Van Somer, of his present Majesty, from whom, it is said, the poet has had

the honour of receiving a complimentary letter written with his own hand.

"Here were Mrs. Shakspeare and her two daughters; the former, who is, I understand, nearly eight years older than her husband, and was married to him when he was but eighteen, appears to be approaching towards sixty; and though thus far advanced in life, still retain some strong traces of having once been eminently beautiful. She was simply but becomingly dressed in a French hood, and moderately sized ruff, a gown of light grey silk, with a black velvet cape slightly embroidered with bugelles, had bracelets on her arms, and an ivory-handled fan of ostrich feathers in her hand. My attention, however, was almost instantly attracted to her eldest daughter, Mrs. Hall, whose features strongly resemble those of her father; and though not regularly handsome, possess a degree of combined sweetness and intelligence which cannot but prepossess every individual in her favour. A smile of the most bewitching expression played upon her lips as I entered the room, and gave the utmost effect to a style of dress singularly tasteful and elegant. A caul or net

of silver thread was thrown over her glossy tresses, and on this were obliquely placed several artificial seed-pods, which were represented open, with rows of pearls for seeds. An open ruff of web-like lawn, a necklace of pearls, and a gown of fawn-coloured muslin, over which was worn a kirtle or mantle of dark brown satin bordered with lace, will complete the portrait of my favourite Susanna; especially when I add, that she inherits a portion of her father's wit and humour, that, in her person, she is somewhat tall and full, but highly lovely and graceful; and, as to age, not much, I should imagine, beyond the period of thirty.

"Judith, the younger by a year or two, I am informed, and who is about to be married to a gentleman of this place of the name of Quiney, wore her hair, according to the custom of our sisterhood, uncovered, knotted, and raised high at the forehead. She had on a gown of Lincoln-green, fitted close to the body, with cut sleeves, and with a very long and pointed bodice. Her ruff, which was large, and stiffened with straw-coloured starch, was curiously plaited; she exhibited a slender chain of gold, pendent

from her neck; had on a petticoat of white taffety, wrought with vine leaves round the bottom, and wore perfumed gloves. In her stature she is rather short, more reserved in her disposition than Mrs. Hall, and less pleasing and intellectual in her countenance.

"Having thus endeavoured to satisfy your curiosity, my sweet friend, by a minute description of the personal appearance of these ladies, who, independent of their own merit, I cannot but consider as objects of peculiar interest from their intimate connection with our bard, I go on to say, that very shortly after Shakspeare and my father joined our party, arrived Dr. Hall, of whom I will only add, that though not a little stiff in his person, and somewhat pedantic in his conversation, for which he has often undergone the good-humoured raillery of his father-in-law, he is reported to be kind and charitable in his disposition, and in general estimation for his professional skill.

"I must now beg you to follow us with your mind's eye into the dining parlour, situated on the opposite side of the vestibule. This room, which is wainscotted with beautifully veined

oak, corresponds in size with that we have just quitted, and is enlivened by several pictures, some of the most valuable of which are protected by curtains of green silk. One over the chimney-piece particularly attracted my attention, being a very fine half length of Queen Elizabeth, by her favourite painter, Hilliard. Under this is suspended the poet's sword, in a crimson velvet-covered scabbard braced with gold. Another very splendid ornament to this parlour, consists of a cupboard of plate, among which I particularly distinguished a large silver gilt bowl.* Shakspeare appears, indeed, owing probably to his intimacy with some in the first ranks of society, and especially his munificent friend, the Earl of Southampton, to have early adopted several of the most delicate and pleasing improvements which have lately found their way into domestic life. We found the table, for instance, instead of being dressed, as usual, with carpet-cloth, covered with fine damask linen; forks, an invention, you know, of only three or

* This piece of plate, which the poet bequeathed to his daughter Judith, is described in his will as "my broad silver gilt bowl."

fort years' standing, were placed for each individual, and trenchers of pewter were in every instance discarded for china or porcelaine.

"Yet though neatness and elegance prevailed throughout, there was nothing of extravagance or ostentation in our entertainment, nothing, in short, beyond the character of the independent country gentleman; and, as a proof of this, I will just mention, in as brief a manner as possible, that our dinner consisted in the *first* course, of stewed trout, a couple of boiled capons, a swan roasted with gallantine sauce, a shield of brawn, carbonadoed tongues, and an olave pye; and in the *second*, of pigeons and young peahens, with pastry, creams, and confections. As the afternoon was one of the loveliest of June, we took our banquet or dessert, which included march pane *, marmalades, dates, and cherries, in an arbour in the poet's garden, and I must add, though rather out of my province, that the wines, numerous according to the fashion of the

* March-pane was a species of sweet cake, composed of sugar and almonds, and therefore very similar to the modern macaroons. It was an almost invariable article at the tables of our ancestors, during the reigns of Elisabeth and James the First.

day, were, in the home-made class, Ipocras*, and bracket; in the foreign, Zeres-sack, claret, muscadine, and Elstertune Rhenish.

"I scarcely ever remember to have passed a pleasanter day than this; for my father, delighted by the good-humour, and conversational powers of his kind host, seemed to have forgotten all his cares and sorrows. Indeed every thing conspired to gratify his feelings; the beauty of the garden, planted by the hand of Shakspeare, the perfume of the roses, the melody of the birds, the blue serenity of the heavens, accompanied as they were by a responding cheerfulness on the features of all around him, could not fail to dissipate all sad-

* This was, indeed, a spiced, rather than a home-made wine, and was a great favourite with our forefathers. The following is Gervase Markham's receipt, written probably about 1616, for the composition of it. "Take a gallon of claret or white wine, and put therein four ounces of ginger, an ounce and a half of nut-megs, of cloves one quarter, of sugar four pound; let all this stand together in a pot at least twelve hours, then take it, and put it into a clean bag made for the purpose, so that the wine may come with good leisure from the spices." — *English House-Wife*, Ninth edition, p. 103.

The *bag* used on this occasion was a woollen one, termed by the apothecaries Hippocrates' Sleeve, whence the *name* of the wine.

ness not footed in despair. It was, in truth, a most lovely and soothing sight to behold this incomparable bard, this unrivalled master of the human passions, thus enjoying, with the utmost simplicity and gaiety of heart, the society of his family and friends; for we were joined, shortly after we had reached the arbour, by his cousin Thomas Greene, a barrister in Chancery, but resident in Stratford, and by Mr. Quiney the admirer of Judith; whilst at the same time, couched at his feet, and courting his ever ready smile, sate two of the sweetest children I have ever seen, his little god-son William Walker, a boy seven years of age, and his grand-daughter Elizabeth Hall.

"After a conversation perfectly easy and unrestrained, yet enlivened by many playful sallies, and in which Mrs. Hall took a conspicuous part, we left the arbour, which I should not forget to tell you, was closely shaded from the sun by the graceful foliage of a grape-vine, to wander through the garden walks. These, which have been newly laid out under the direction of the poet, are partly open, and partly close, either bordered with flower-beds, or

shadowed by fruit-trees, and amongst the latter is one of the lately imported mulberry trees, with which, as well from his own taste and inclination, as from deference to the circular letters of his Majesty, he has embellished the termination of his garden. This elegant tree, which was planted by Shakspeare's own hand, and is now six years old, thrives well, and promises to become a very useful and distinguished ornament to his pleasure-ground. It was the first, he told us, which had been seen in the place or neighbourhood; and, if I may be allowed to turn prophet on the occasion, I would venture to predict, that long after the present generation has ceased to breathe, it will be held in veneration for the poet's sake.

"The weather being singularly fine, we were induced to linger in the open air until near six o'clock, when, after evening prayer, supper was announced; and, as soon as this was finished, we adjourned to the tapestried parlour. Here, in music and conversation, the hours passed unperceived away. A Welsh harp, and the virginals *

* *Virginals*, a musical instrument something similar to a small harpsichord, or what was formerly in use under the name

were in the room, and I was induced by Shakspeare, who is, as you would naturally suppose, enthusiastically fond of music, to touch the former, as being my favourite instrument. I fortunately recollected that most admirable passage in his *Twelfth Night*, where he makes the Duke exclaim —

'Give me some music: — but that piece of song,
That old and antique song we heard last night:
Mark it, Cæsario; it is old, and plain:
The spinsters and the knitters in the sun,
And the free maids, that weave their thread with
bones,
Do use to chaunt it: —'

and I instantly sang to my harp that old and popular ditty,

'It was the friar of orders grey,
As he forth walked on his way,'

for which I felt so amply rewarded by the smile and approval of the poet, that I ventured, in

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of a spinet. It was the favourite instrument of Queen Elizabeth. — Vide *Shakspeare and his Times*, vol. ii. p. 150.

concluding it, to present him with one of his own exquisite songs,

'Where the bee sucks, there suck I,'

just set by my favourite composer, Orlando Gibbons. I will not repeat the gratifying things which fell from our host on this occasion; but shall only add, that after several beautiful madrigals from Mrs. Hall, whose voice is singularly sweet and clear, among which I was particularly struck with that lovely song of her father's,

'Take, oh take those lips away,'

so admirably set by Byrd, we retired for the night, having previously, however, as is still the fashion, you know, in the country, partaken of a rich posset, served up in the large silver gilt bowl, which I mentioned to you as one of the ornaments of the dining-room.

"You will now think it high time, I apprehend, my beloved Agnes, that I should conclude this prodigious long letter; but I was desirous of giving you an unbroken detail of the occurrences of the first day which my father and

myself had an opportunity of spending *together* with our new friends. The interest which I know, in your contemplation, and that of your uncle, attaches itself to every thing connected with the person and family of Shakspeare, must plead my excuse for this prolixity. What has occurred here since the day I have thus minutely described, and I can assure you our time has not been idly spent, you shall have when I see you at Wyeburne Hall. We prosecute our journey thither in a few days, and as a temptation to hasten to your friend which cannot fail of having its due effect, I will just add, that it is highly probable we shall soon be honoured with a visit from our dear and amiable bard.

"Farewell, my sweet cousin, and continue to love her who doth most exceedingly love you.

"HELEN MONTCHENSEY."

Of the occurrences alluded to in the above letters, as taking place between the period of Montchensey's mingling with the family at New-Place, and his departure for Wyeburne Hall, we shall now proceed to give some account, merely observing in this place, that if Helen

had deferred her communication a few days longer, she would have found something still more attractive to Agnes, and much more allied to her own fortunes and feelings to expatiate upon, than what had been the subject of her late correspondence, however curious and interesting it had proved.

Shakspeare had felt, as we have already remarked, extremely anxious to lighten the load which seemed to press with so much weight upon the spirits of his elder guest; and now that he was able to enter into society, he endeavoured by occasional company, and, as far as his reviving strength would permit, by short excursions in Stratford and its neighbourhood, to divert the current of his thoughts. As nothing, however, so effectually contributed to abstract Montchensey from his own affairs, as what more immediately related to the person and character of his host, the latter submitted, though somewhat reluctantly, to become, every now and then, his own historian.

"Yes, my friend," returned the bard, in answer to a question put by Montchensey, as they one morning sauntered along Henley Street,

"if posterity should ever enquire about such a personage as myself, it may be told that here," pointing to an ancient and somewhat homely-looking tenement, "he drew the first breath of life, and passed his childhood, and his early youth." "And may we be allowed," cried Helen, her fine eyes sparkling with enthusiasm and turned upon Shakspeare, as if imploring his consent, "may we be allowed to cross this hallowed threshold?" "If vanity, my fair young flatterer," he replied, "were not the prescriptive inmate of the poet's breast, you would, without all question, plant it there. It is hallowed, however, in my estimation, my dear lady, by the memory of a man of worth; for it was beneath this humble roof that my father lived and died, and maintained a family of eight children.* I am the eldest and last surviving son, and it is a source of inexpressible comfort to me to reflect, that I was able through the patronage of the public to render his latter days easy and

* "Our poet's mother," says Mr. Malone, "never appears to have borne to her husband more than *eight* children, *five* of whom only, namely, four sons and one daughter, attained to years of maturity."—Vide MALONE's *Shakspeare*, apud Boswell, vol. ii. p. 51.

independent. It is now about fourteen years since I lost him, and I revisit this house, which I have taken care to preserve nearly in the state in which he left it, with sensations which, if somewhat different from those with which you are kindly pleased to view it, my gentle lady, yet leave me, I trust, a wiser and a better man."

"Ah! my dear Sir," cried Helen blushing, yet with a deep expression of admiration on her features, "you must permit me to say, that he was *your* Shakspeare, whilst *you* are *everybody's* Shakspeare." "It is smartly and eloquently put, my sweet Ellen," rejoined the poet, smiling, whilst the hectic of a moment cross'd his cheek, "but, conscious as I am of my own deficiencies, I dare not trust the picture which the glow of your too partial imagination would place before me, — but let us enter."

"I have heard," remarked Montchensey, sitting down in an old oak armed chair, and surveying the apartment into which they had been admitted with no slight interest, "I have heard, though I know not how truly, that Mr. John Shakspeare was in the woollen trade." "His principal occupation, Master Montchen-

sey," returned the bard, "was that of a glover *; and though in reduced circumstances when I first left Stratford for London, owing in a great measure to the pressure of a large family, of which, I am sorry to say, I was then a very thoughtless and extravagant member yet had he formerly lived in comparative affluence, having filled the office of High Bailiff for his native town; and with pride and pleasure can I add, that not only when fortune favoured him, did he perform the duties of a man and a magistrate with promptitude and effect, but that in the hour of adversity he exerted every nerve to support with decency a numerous offspring."

A tear trembled on the cheek of Shakspeare as he uttered these last words, and Montchensey, anxious to avert what might, in the slightest degree, give pain, enquired if the school where he had been educated were yet in existence. "I will show it you," he replied, "as we

* This has been satisfactorily ascertained by Mr. Malone from a very ancient manuscript account of the proceedings in the bailiff's court at Stratford. — See his *Shakspeare*, apud Boswell, vol. ii. p. 78.

return, for it stands very near New-Place, occupying, indeed, the upper part of the Guild-hall, just beyond the Chapel of the Holy Cross, whose porch and windows you admired so much."

"And it was here, my friend," exclaimed Montchensey, as they entered the school-room, "that you passed the short period allowed you for scholastic exercises! for, I presume, from what you hinted the other day in your library, that the term of your education was but brief."

"It lasted not quite four years," returned the bard, "and this is the very spot," placing his hand upon a large ink-stained and somewhat mutilated desk, "where my scanty stock of Greek and Latin was acquired; for my father, whose circumstances were then becoming embarrassed, not only found himself unable to continue me longer here, but wanted moreover my assistance in his trade; and from the age of twelve to that of eighteen, I was, or ought to have been, engaged in the concerns of his business."

"Not, I will venture to assert, however," cried Montchensey, "without many intervals

devoted to more genial pursuits, to the play of fancy, and the love of song."

"I was, indeed, an idle dog, Master Montchensey," replied Shakspeare, archly smiling, "a very idle dog, and greatly more addicted, I must confess, to sport and pleasure, than to any more serious or profitable occupation. An event, however, which happened very shortly after I left this school, contributed materially not only to foster this disposition for a time, but to predispose me to the way of life which I afterward pursued on quitting Stratford. This was no other than the magnificent festival given by the Earl of Leicester on the Queen's visit to his castle of Kenilworth, which, as being only a few miles distant from Stratford, I was allowed by my father, in company, indeed, with most of the youth of this place and the neighbourhood, to attend. I was placed, however, under the protection of an old harper, who had, in his younger days, been a servant with my father, a man grey with age, but skilled in the use of his instrument; and nothing would serve me but I must go accoutred as his page, a fancy

which, as it turned out, proved of no small service to my future lot in life.'

"The scene which now burst upon my opening mind can never, Master Montchensey, as long as memory retains her function, be effaced from it. The pomp and splendour of the pageantry, and, above all, the dramatic cast of the greater part of the entertainments, absolutely fascinated, and, I may say, absorbed my imagination; for, not only was I present with the country round, at the old Coventry play of Hock Tuesday, but I was admitted, with my friend, the harper, whose services had been required on the occasion, to see the play which, the same evening, after supper, was performed more privately before the Queen. And here I had the good fortune to attract the notice of her majesty, who probably struck with the tenderness of my years, and the fanciful dress which I had assumed, was pleased to enquire who I was, and whence I came, a circumstance which, when in after life I had acquired some little publicity as a dramatic writer, brought the name of Will Shakspeare to her ear, with associations which, inducing her to ascertain if the page and the

poet were the same, more readily disposed her to patronise the interests of the latter."

"It was an incident, my dear Sir," interrupted Helen, "most happily adapted to awaken the sympathies of our late noble Queen, who, with all her masculine and statesman-like talents, had a strong bias for whatever was tinged with the romantic. You must allow me, nevertheless, to remark, that however this discovery of identity might at first heighten the interest which she felt in your favour, it could only be to the superiority of acknowledged genius that you were indebted for her marked and continued support."

Shakspeare bowed, whilst Montchensey reverting to the effect of what had been related on the youthful mind of the poet, observed, that in his opinion, nothing could have happened better calculated to fan the opening flame of genius, than the spectacle and incident at Kenilworth; "and I can easily conceive," he added, "that after this period, however duty and necessity might demand an attention to business, inclination was but little subservient to the call."

"As the matter ultimately turned out, my friend," replied Shakspeare, "all was well;

yet I cannot now look back upon this portion of my life without many a pang of compunction and regret, nor without thinking it right to add, that the conduct which I too often pursued during these my juvenile years would, nine times out of ten, lead, as it had nearly done in my own case, to poverty and disgrace. In saying this, however, I must beg to be understood as not charging myself, setting one foolish enterprise aside, with any thing more formidable than too frequently neglecting the interests of my father's business for the gratification of my own youthful pleasures. In short, to ramble through the woods and fields, to trace the banks of the Avon as far as my legs would carry me, to loiter in the noon-tide heat beneath the shelter of some aged oak, absorbed in my own wayward fancies, or to join with more than common enthusiasm in the sports and frolics of the young and thoughtless, were indulgences to which I sacrificed not only a great part of my time from the period of twelve to fifteen, but, with contrition do I say it, much too large a portion of the next three years; so that at the age of little more than eighteen, my father, anxious for the consequences of such

a desultory mode of life, was induced to sanction a partiality which I had for some time entertained for a young woman in this neighbourhood, about eight years older than myself, under the hope that, as a husband and a father, I should feel the necessity of becoming more attentive to the concerns of business."

"If I might venture, without offence, to form a conjecture as to the issue of this engagement," remarked Montchensey, as descending from the grammar-school, they turned to re-enter New-Place, "I would say, that though, as might be expected from the poet of 'Venus and Adonis,' you proved an ardent disciple of the tender passion, and, no doubt, a faithful and affectionate husband, yet, as to business, the experiment did not altogether succeed."

"I cannot say it did," returned the bard, somewhat archly surveying both Montchensey and his daughter, whilst on the countenance of the latter dwelt a smile of the most enchanting playfulness; "and I rather suspect that you are better acquainted with my juvenile adventures than I had imagined. Yet I can assure you, that though at an age when love and liberty are

objects of dearest estimation, I had formed, on entering into the marriage state, such a serious determination to direct all the talents I possessed to business, that not satisfied with merely assisting my father in his own peculiar line, I endeavoured, as an additional means of supporting a family, to acquire a knowledge of a lucrative branch of the law; and, in fact, through the aid of a near relative, himself a member of the legal profession, I became in a little time sufficiently versed in what is termed the *Art of Conveyancing*, as to have rendered it, but for some untoward circumstances, a source of no inconsiderable emolument."

"Ah! my dear Sir," cried Helen, laughing, and encouraged by the sly expression of humour which mantled on the features of the poet as he closed the above detail, "you will pardon me, I am sure, if in alluding to what fame has recorded of this frolic period of your life, I venture to remind you, that, in the opinion of your neighbour Sir Thomas Lucy, you carried your newly-acquired art of conveyancing somewhat beyond the limits which either he or his brethren in the magistracy could approve!"

"A mad exploit, my young friend," rejoined the bard, "and one which even the ebullition of youth, and the warmth of an undisciplined imagination, can scarcely palliate, much less excuse. It was my misfortune, indeed, at this period, to have formed an intimacy with several lawless and hair-brained spirits, and the incursion which they proposed was but too accordant with that love of the wild and adventurous which had for some years animated my breast, and played before my fancy, to be rejected with the indignation which it merited. I can well remember, in fact, that it struck me in the light of one of those bold achievements I had read of in the predatory warfare of ancient times, and the danger it involved served only to recommend it the more."*

* Notwithstanding all that Mr. Malone has brought forward to prove that no park existed, either at Charlecote or Fulbroke in Shakspeare's time, I cannot help thinking that the story of our poet's frolic must, from the universality and iteration of the tradition connected with it, have had some foundation in truth. "It is," as Mr. Malone himself has observed, "an old and just observation, that *omnis fabula fundatur in historia*; the most fictitious accounts which tradition has handed down to us, have generally had some little resemblance or admixture of truth in them."—(Vol. ii. p. 79.) I am therefore inclined to believe,

As Shakspeare uttered these words they reached the threshold of New-Place; and being all engaged to dinner at Mr. Combe's, of Strat-

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that Sir Thomas Lucy, though he never possessed a legal park, had yet deer within enclosed grounds; and that Shakspeare was proceeded against by, or threatened with, an action of trespass for his misdemeanour. It should also be observed, that when Mr. Malone declares that this mode of accrediting the story is scarcely worth considering, for that "of keeping deer in *unenclosed* grounds no example can be produced," he seems to have forgotten the import of a passage which he has quoted from Blackstone in the preceding page, who expressly says, "the word park, properly signifies an enclosure: but yet it is not every field or common, which a gentleman chooses to surround with a wall or paling, and to stock with a herd of deer, that is thereby constituted a *legal* park;" an observation which evidently implies, not only that such a *species of enclosed lands* for keeping deer, though in the eye of the law considered as *unenclosed*, had occurred, but that it had also not unfrequently occurred. We are likewise told by Mr. Malone, in a previous part of his volume, (p. 131) that in parliament Sir Thomas Lucy "was very active in the preservation of the game," an activity not very likely to have existed, unless he was, in some way or other, immediately interested in the protection of it, but which will very sufficiently account for what Mr. Malone has remarked, that "the first scene of the Merry Wives of Windsor, certainly affords ground for believing that our author, on some account or other, had not the most profound respect for Sir Thomas Lucy."—Vol. ii. p. 141.

The frequency also of this kind of depredation in the days of Shakspeare, and the moral light in which it was considered by his contemporaries, add further credence to the story.

ford College, Helen had only time, ere she retired to make some alteration in her dress, to petition her kind host that they might visit the

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"To form a right judgment," says Mr. Malone, "on this, as on many other subjects, it is necessary to take into our consideration the prevalent opinions and practices of the time. If these be attended to, in the present case, the act which has been imputed to our poet, however unjustifiable, will rather appear in the light of a youthful indiscretion, in which light it is frequently represented, than as a very criminal offence. That it was a common practice among the young men of those days, and being wholly unmixed with any sordid or lucrative motive, (for the venison thus obtained . . not sold, but freely participated at a convivial board,) was considered merely a juvenile frolic, may be inferred from a passage in a tract of that age, where it is classed with the other ordinary levities and amusements of youth. 'Time of recreation,' (says a writer against stage plays in 1599,) 'is necessarie, I graunt, and thinke as necessarie for scholars, that are scholars in deede, as it is for any. Yet in my opinion it were not fit for them to play at stoole-ball among wenches, nor at chance or maw with idle loose companions, nor at trunkes in guile-halls, nor to danse about may-poles, nor to ruffle in ale houses, nor to carouse in tavernes, nor to *steale deere*, nor to rob *orchards.*'—(*Overthrow of Stage Plaies*, 4to. 1599. p. 23.) In like manner, Anthony Wood, speaking of Dr. John Thornborough, who was admitted a member of Magdalen College in Oxford, in 1570, at the age of eighteen, and was successively bishop of Limerick, in Ireland, and bishop of Bristol and Worcester, in England, informs us, that 'he and his kinsman, Robert Pinkney, seldom studied or gave themselves to their bookes; but spent their time in the *fencing-schools*, and *dancing-schools*, in *stealing deer* and *conies*, in *hunting the hare*,

next morning Charlecote and its deer-park, as the scene of an adventure which, in its ultimate consequences, had contributed so essentially not only to his own prosperity, but to the very being and perfection of dramatic poetry in England; a request which, we may well conceive, from the channel through which it came, and from the mode in which it was enforced, could only be assented to by the poet with the utmost cordiality and good humour.

Stratford College, erected in the reign of Edward the Third, by Ralph de Stratford, afterwards bishop of London, was now the mansion and residence of William Combe, Esq. the nephew of John Combe, who had died the year before, who had been the friend, and often the companion of Shakspeare. The present pos-

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and *wooing girl*.'—(*Athen. Oxon.* i. 371.) At the time here referred to, Thornborough was a bachelor of arts, and twenty-two years old."

Various other passages to the same effect are given by Mr. Malone, who remarks as the result of the whole, that "it is clear, therefore, that this kind of trespass, even were it justly imputable to Shakspeare, would not leave any very deep stain on his character, being, in his time, considered merely as a playful 'trick of youth.'"—Vol. ii. p. 132 et seq.

sessor, who was about thirty years of age, was a man of estimable character and amiable manners, and a warm admirer also of the talents and the virtues of Shakspeare, who cherished both for him and his younger brother Thomas a very sincere regard, and now spoke of them to Montchensey, as they proceeded towards the College, in terms of affectionate friendship.

This venerable building, constructed of hewn free-stone, and of considerable strength and size, was situated on the west side of the church-yard, and, being not destitute of architectural beauty, and surrounded by extensive pleasure-grounds and gardens, was justly considered as an ornament to the town. The east, or principal entrance, was under a massy porch or door-way, opening into a spacious hall extending the whole length of the central front, vaulted to the roof, and its coving richly ornamented with stucco-work; whilst the north wing, which, previous to the dissolution, had been occupied by the warden and officiating priests, was now arranged into three ample apartments, a withdrawing room, a banqueting room, and a library. Into the first of these were Shakspeare, his family

and friends, introduced, and here they had the pleasure of meeting Lord Carew of Clopton, and his lady, Sir Thomas Stafford, his lordship's natural son, then upon a visit to Clopton House, and Dr. and Mrs Hall.

It was a spectacle truly gratifying to Montchensey and his daughter, to witness the cordiality and pleasure with which Shakspeare was welcomed, not only by his intimate friends, the Combes, but by the noble family of Clopton, who seemed, from their marked attention to the poet, to show how well they could appreciate the value of his great and incomparable talents. Nor was Montchensey himself a total stranger either to Mr. Combe, whom he had more than once seen at Warwick, or to the visitors from Clopton House, as during a residence in Ireland in the year 1600, in a military capacity, he had become acquainted with Sir Thomas Stafford, then secretary to his father, Sir George Carew, as president of Munster. A recognition was soon established; and Shakspeare then stepping forward, introduced his lovely guest, the fair and blushing Helen, to the admiration of his friends. He had claimed this as his delightful

and peculiar privilege, and it was, indeed, a sight more than commonly attractive, to behold beauty thus led on by genius of unrivalled lustre.

It was scarcely possible, indeed, to see Helen Montchensey without being interested in her favour, such was the fascinating, and at the same time the intelligent expression of her features; but it was to the sweetness of her disposition, and the unaffected simplicity of her manners, that she owed her influence over the mind of Shakspeare, who seemed to contemplate in her a living counterpart of what his fancy had formed whilst sketching the bewitching portraits of Viola and Fidele.

To be thus the avowed favourite of the man beyond all others skilled in the knowledge of the human heart, was, in itself, a powerful recommendation to all; but, when enforced by female loveliness, irresistible. There was one, however, by whom the scene was viewed with feelings peculiarly his own; for how shall we paint the proud gratification of the father, when he beheld him whom he had long enthusiastically venerated as first among the sons of men for creative energy of talent, thus present-

ing his beloved daughter to the notice and approbation of his best and most valued acquaintance!

With the exception of Lord Southampton, there were few noblemen, perhaps, better qualified by their taste and literature, and experience of life, and none more willing, from an intimacy with the virtues of the man, to do justice to the merits of Shakspeare, than was Lord Carew. He had ever been also peculiarly susceptible to the attractions of the softer sex; but to pay homage to beauty from the hand of Shakspeare, formed a duty singularly novel and interesting, and which he discharged with more than his wonted courtesy and grace.

Nor could any thing be more friendly or hospitably kind than the conduct and civilities of Mr. and Mrs. Combe, who, while they paid all due respect to fortune, rank, and title, were at the same time most assiduously attentive to Shakspeare, conscious how far beyond wealth or heraldic distinction were the deathless honours of their humble townsman. This was a sentiment, indeed, even in that stately and almost feudal age of magnificence, common, as hath

been already observed, to nearly all the inhabitants of Stratford and its neighbourhood; for the excellence of Shakspeare had been in a line of composition familiar to their business and their bosoms; and so mild, so kind, and unassuming were his manners, that it was difficult to decide whether he was more the love or the pride of their hearts.

Dinner was now announced, and at half-past twelve the party at the college sate down in the banqueting room to an elegant and a varied board. The conversation soon took an interesting turn, and among many topics connected with the localities of the place and neighbourhood, that of the fire which had the preceding year threatened the very existence of the town, and had been, of course, productive of incalculable distress, became the subject of discussion. The ravages of this dreadful conflagration, which in less than two hours had consumed fifty-four houses, were still in many places but too apparent, and had forcibly attracted, during his morning's excursion, the notice of Montchensey, who now observed, that he was happy to see the new buildings constructing of materials

which would render them in future less liable to such an accident.

"It is an improvement of most essential consequence to our peace and security," remarked Mr. Combe, "for no place has suffered more from the depredations of fire than Stratford. Not more than twenty years ago, twice, on the same day twelvemonth, was it nearly destroyed from the like cause, two hundred dwelling-houses having been consumed on those two days; and yet were they immediately rebuilt of the same perishable materials, and thatched. Awful, however, as was the rage of the devouring element on these memorable days, and much as I was alarmed, being then but a boy of ten years of age, yet was the impression on my mind less fearful and vivid than what, owing to accompanying circumstances, occurred from the conflagration of last July; for my uncle was at that time dying, and such was the fury of the flames, in consequence of the wind setting in full upon the town, that there was long reason to apprehend not a single house would have escaped. My friend Shakspeare, who happened to be with me on a visit of enquiry after my

uncle when the fire first broke out, instantly rushed forth, not only to protect his own family, but, having seen them safe, to assist in protecting others, and was, I may venture to say, in strumental, even at the risk of his own life, in rescuing much valuable property, and in preserving likewise, by his counsel and directions, many houses which would otherwise have fallen a sacrifice to the flames."

It was at this moment, and whilst Shakspeare was expressing the satisfaction he felt from the idea of having been useful to his fellow townsmen on such an occasion, that Dr. Hall, who sate next to Montchensey, took the opportunity of whispering in his ear, that he was apprehensive the exertions which his father-in-law had been induced to make during this dreadful fire, might prove seriously injurious to his health; for though he generally looked well, and thought himself, indeed, free from any dangerous complaint, yet, ever since that disastrous day, he had been subject to transient, but, in his opinion, alarming affections of his breath, especially upon walking more rapidly than usual, or ascending any rising ground. "I confess," he

continued, "I am greatly puzzled about the nature of this disorder, which has never occurred to me before with precisely the same symptoms; but as the attacks, which are not frequent, have hitherto gone off simply and quickly from rest, and seem to leave no traces of derangement behind, I have not thought it prudent to excite any inquietude in his family upon the subject."* The statement, however, occasioned considerable uneasiness in the breast of Montchensey, who justly deemed the life of Shakspeare peculiarly dear, not only to every individual who knew him, but to the public at large; and he immediately enquired of the Doctor, if he did not think change of air might be of service; for I am in great hopes," he added, "of inducing your father-in-law to visit me this summer in Derbyshire." Here this bye conversation was broken in upon by Sir Thos. Stafford's asking Dr. Hall, who, he understood from Mr. Combe, had attended his uncle to the last, if

* It is highly probable, I think, from the consideration that the bust of Shakspeare on his Stratford monument, and which is said to have been taken from a cast after death, exhibits no signs of emaciation, that the poet died suddenly, or, at least after a very short illness.

he thought the dying moments of his patient had been disturbed by any consciousness of the alarm which surrounded him.

"I believe not," replied he, "for he had been long sinking from the mere pressure of years; his mental faculties were nearly gone, and he expired the day following, July the 10th, without a struggle, and in the eightieth year of his age."

"I am happy to learn," remarked Lord Carew, who was now only a rare and transient visitor at Clopton-House, his chief residence being in London, "that your uncle, Mr. Combe, disposed of his large property in a manner so satisfactory to his relations, while, at the same time, he so liberally and judiciously remembered the poor."

"His charities my lord, were not I do assure you," replied Mr. Combe, "confined to his Will; for though my uncle has been exposed to a good deal of bitter sarcasm on account of his supposed over fondness for the accumulation ot money, I can venture to affirm, on my own knowledge, that he was during his life-time peculiarly attentive to the distresses of his poor

neighbours, and ever ready to relieve their wants."

"On a subject like this," cried Shakspeare, with great earnestness of manner, "I feel peculiarly called upon to afford *my* testimony; for it has been circulated, I find, with an industry as officious as it is malevolent, that a certain severe epitaph on my deceased friend, with which we are all probably acquainted, originated with myself. I will not deny but that, in the gaiety of my heart, I have occasionally rallied him on the great care which he directed towards the increase of his wealth; but I knew, at the same time, the worth and the charity of his heart, and must, therefore, disclaim any participation in the fabric of a satire which could only have originated with one who knew Mr. Combe but by vulgar report. Indeed I have some reason to think, that the lines in question are from the pen of young Braithwayte, who last year printed a little work called *The Poet's Willow, or the Passionate Shepherd.*"

"Nothing more likely," observed Mr. Thomas Combe, "for I knew Dick Braithwayte when he was a commoner of Oriel College, Ox-

ford. It is now about eight years ago; he was then nineteen, and, therefore, nearly of my own age; and I can well remember having held several conversations with him on Stratford and its inhabitants, and particularly as describing my uncle to him as prodigiously wealthy, and, at that time, in my own opinion, not a little parsimonious." *

"My dear friend," exclaimed the elder Mr. Combe, as soon as his brother had done speaking, and shaking the poet, at the same time, most cordially by the hand, "were it not that we have some here not quite so thoroughly acquainted with the benevolence of your disposition as myself, such a disclaimer had been altogether needless; but you well know, from

* Richard Braithwayte was born at Warcop, near Appleby, in Westmoreland, in 1588, and at the age of sixteen became a commoner of Oriel college, Oxford, being matriculated as a gentleman's son, and a native of Westmoreland. In his "Remains, &c." published in 1618, occurs the epitaph in question, "of which," says Mr. Boswell, after weighing all the circumstances connected with its attribution to Shakspeare, "I have very little doubt that Braithwayte was the author."—MALONE'S *Shakspeare*, vol. ii. p. 500.

Braithwayte died at Appleton, near Richmond in Yorkshire, May 4th, 1673. His "Poet's Willow" was published in 1614.

long and home-felt experience, that wit is often involuntarily compelled to father what it has not written; and I cannot but remind you," he added laughing, "as one reason, perhaps, for the attribution of which you complain, that there was a time, though now long since passed, when the sharpness of your poetical retort on a former neighbour of ours, occasioned some little stir in this place, though it happily led, in conjunction with the youthful frolic from which it took its origin, to that line of life which has placed you, at length, on the very summit of dramatic reputation."

"It is on this very account, Mr. Combe," cried Helen Montchensey, "that I and my father so much wish to see the scene of this juvenile exploit, and my kind host here," smiling upon Shakspeare as she spoke, with the most bewitching archness, "has been good enough to promise that he will to-morrow morning gratify our desire, and conduct us to the spot himself."

"I am certain," returned Mr. Combe, "that the worthy family at Charlcote will receive you, were it only for your conductor's sake, with the

utmost hospitality; for Sir Thomas has never suffered the prejudices of his father to enter his breast; and with him, indeed, all recollection of the juvenile deer-stalker is lost in the regard which he feels for the poet and the man."

"I thank you, my good neighbour," exclaimed the modest bard, "for your partial opinion; but it behoves me to place the matter in its more probable light, and to say, that Sir Thomas Lucy is too wise a man to visit the sins of the stripling on the head of unoffending age." Then turning to Mr. Thomas Combe, for whom he entertained a more than common regard, "What say you, my young friend," he continued, "this is an idle time with you, for to-morrow is our Midsummer's vigil; will you join us in this pilgrimage to Charlcote?"

"With all the pleasure in life," replied Mr. Combe, with extraordinary animation, while Lord Carew and Sir Thomas Stafford declared, that, were they not obliged to leave Clopton the next morning, they should have petitioned for leave to increase the party. "And may not I be allowed, my dear father," said Mrs. Hall, who hitherto had had no opportunity of becom-

ing acquainted with the intended excursion, "may not I be allowed to form one of your number? for though familiar with the scenes you are about to visit, I should much enjoy retracing them in the company of Helen Montchensey."

"Certainly, Susanna, if the Doctor sees no objection, we shall be most happy to have you amongst us."

The conversation now took a more general turn, and, after being supported for some time with much sprightliness and good humour, the party adjourned to the cool and shady retreats of the college gardens, where the evening coming on remarkably balmy and serene, they enjoyed to a late hour, encanopied, as it were, amid flowers of every hue, the fragrant freshness of the summer breeze.

(*To be continued.*)

No. IV.

The groves of Eden, vanish'd now so long,
Live in description, and grow green in song.
POPE.

OF that highly beautiful and exquisitely finished poem, *Les Jardins, par M. L'Abbé De Lille*, we possess two translations, one well known from the pen of Mrs. Montolieu, and the other published anonymously in the year 1789.

It is to this version of 1789, now fallen into neglect, and become extremely scarce, that I wish to recall the attention of the lovers of poetry and of the original work, not as being executed throughout with undeviating skill, but as possessing parts of uncommon excellence; such, indeed, as not only do justice to the original, but, from the more poetical structure of our language and versification, seem to rise above it in richness and in tone. One great cause, however, of this apparent superiority has arisen from the free and very happy manner in which the translator has often introduced the

colouring, and even the very diction of our noblest bards, where the subjects happened to be of a kind that would admit of such an adoption with judgment and effect. M. De Lille was, to the credit of his taste, a great admirer of English poetry, and has copied in his gardens, though, perhaps, without sufficient acknowledgment, many of the finest passages of Pope and Thomson, Goldsmith and Gray, passages which, though moulded and naturalised, as it were, by a great and congenial spirit, and the first perhaps of Gallic bards, lose, from the very genius of the language to which they are transferred, and more especially to an English ear, no small portion of their pristine raciness and charm.' It is evident, then, that the mere re-clothing of these, as far as it was possible, in the garb and spirit of their primary appearance as to style and manner, would give a great additional interest, in the estimation of a British public, to a poem in so many respects calculated to win upon and fix their regard; and, I may add, that it is a task which, notwithstanding the delicacy and difficulty accompanying it, the translator professes, in many instances, to have chalked

out for himself, and in which it is but justice to declare that he has in general succeeded.

What then, it may be asked, has occasioned a version with so many apparent claims to patronage and admiration, to sink into neglect and utter forgetfulness? Two causes may be assigned in reply; the first arising from a source already alluded to, the great inequality of the translation; for though the more poetical parts of the original are transferred with all the energy and beauty just described, there are many and large portions which are tamely and inadequately rendered; a fault for which there is no exemplar in the French poem, as it is one of the prominent merits of De Lille to have betrayed no feebleness or relaxation throughout his design, but to have touched and retouched every part until the whole came from his forming hand a model of simplicity and taste.

The second cause for the neglect which the version before us has experienced, may doubtless be attributed to the circumstance of its having been undertaken within a very few years after the first publication of the original in the year 1782; when, consequently, as no second edi-

tion of our translator's labours has appeared, it must want the many episodes and descriptions, (the latter principally taken from English scenery,) which have been introduced into numerous subsequent impressions of the French work. It was not, indeed, until after several editions of "Les Jardins" had passed through the press, that De Lille ventured to introduce, as he had long wished and promised to do, a description of the gardens of England, and in the impression including these sketches, he thus notices the attempt, beautifully alluding as he does it, to the memory and the rural retreat of the bard of Twickenham. "Cette nouvelle édition a été retardeé par des obstacles imprévus dont le detail est inutile. La foiblesse de mes yeux et de mes moyens m'ayant empêché de visiter, comme je me l'etois promis, les plus beaux jardins d'Angleterre, je n'en ai cité qu'un petit nombre, cèlèbres par leur beauté ou pars les souvenirs qu'ils rappellent. Tels sont Blenheim, Stow, et le jardin de Pope, si heureux d'appartenir à un homme plein de goût, qui, en conservant religeusement la demeure et les jardins de ce grand poëte, rend à sa mémoire l'hommage à la fois le

plus simple et le plus honorable. Les premiers monumens d'un écrivain fameux sont sa maison qu'il a bâtie, les jardins qu'il a plantés, la bibliothèque qu'il a formée. C'est là, si l'on croyoit encore aux ombres, qu'il faudroit chercher la sienne." *

It is necessary, in this place, however, to mention, that as all the features which constitute the leading excellencies of the work, and which have secured for it a justly merited popularity, are to be found in the early impressions, the subsequent matter, with but one or two exceptions, adding rather to the bulk than the intrinsic value of the poem, the version of 1789 may be considered, as far as it has succeeded in its attempt, as not being deficient in any part which has truly served to build up the fame of the original author. I say, as far as it has succeeded, not only with reference to the more brilliant passages, but under a conviction that its chief and perhaps only fault, springs from

* Les Jardins; ou l'Art D'Embeller Les Paysages. Poëme. Par M. L'Abbé De Lille. Nouvelle Edition, Revue, Corrigée, et Augmentée. A Londres: Chez B. Dulau et Co. Soho Square. 1811. Preface p. ix.

that want of sustained finish already adverted to as one of the characteristics of the French poem; an inequality, however, which has rendered it peculiarly fitted for the process it is about to undergo in this paper, that of separating its gems from the mass of inferior matter in which they are imbedded.

On the merits of the original work of De Lille, which has been naturalised in almost every European language, it would be superfluous, in the present day, to enter into any critical disquisition; but it may be remarked, that "Les Jardins," form a poem which both in manner and matter is built upon a literature and taste almost exclusively extrinsic to the country of its birth; and that whilst its author, with a singular freedom from national prejudice, adopted as his best and purest models the first poets of Britain, he has furnished at the same time, not only the most striking and successful instance of an almost complete emancipation from the pompous frigidity and declamatory affectation, which have so generally debased the poetry of his countrymen, but he has shown also, and in a way so fascinating as to have disarmed all envy

and struck dumb the malevolence of criticism, of what unaffected tenderness and comparative simplicity, of what stores of natural painting and unsophisticated feeling, it might easily and efficiently be rendered the vehicle. Indeed no man appears to have come to the task with talents more fitted to ensure success, or with a higher estimate of what should be achieved, in this department of the art, than De Lille. In his preface, when speaking of the two kinds of interest of which poetry is susceptible, that of the subject and that of the composition, he justly observes, that as the didactic branch, is incapable of exhibiting either the intricacies of fable or the excitement of the stronger passions, it must rest its attractions in a great measure, if not altogether, on this latter species of interest. "Il faut donc suppléer cet intérêt," he proceeds, "par les détails les plus soignés, et par les agrémens du style le plus brillant et le plus pur. C'est la qu'il faut que la justesse des idées, la vivacité du coloris, l'abondance des images, le charme de la variété, l'adresse des contrastes, une harmonie enchanteresse, une élégance soutenue, attachent et réveillent continuellement

le lecteur. Mais ce mérite demande l'organisation la plus heureuse, le goût le plus exquis, le travail le plus opiniâtre. Aussi les chefs-d'œuvres en ce genre sont ils rares. L'Europe compte deux cents bonnes tragedies: les Géorgiques et le poëme de Lucrèce, chez les anciens, sont les seuls monumens du second genre; et tandis que les tragédies d'Ennius, de Pacuvius, la Médée même d'Ovide, ont péri, l'antiquité nous a transmis ces deux poëmes, et il semble que le génie de Rome, ait encoré veillé sur sa gloire en nous conservant ces chefs-d'œuvres. Parmi les modernes nous ne connoissons guère que les deux poëmes des Saisons, Anglois et François, l'Art Poëtique de Boileau, et l'admirable Essai sur l'Homme de Pope, qui aient obtenu et conservé une place distinguée parmi les ouvrages de ce genre de poésie." *

It is to be regretted that when this preface was written, the Abbé should have forgotten to enumerate among the distinguished didactic poems of the moderns, the "English Garden" of his contemporary *Mason*; which had been now completed, and in extensive circulation for nearly

* Les Jardins. Preface, pp. xi xii.

twenty years. He has, indeed, in the opening of the additional matter which he has given us to the advertisement prefixed to the early editions of his work, adverted to this beautiful poem; for, it appears, that he had been charged, especially in this country, with having been too largely indebted to it. "Quelques littérateurs Anglois," he says, "ont cru que j'avois pris l'idée, et plusieurs détails de ce poëme dans celui qu'a composé sur la meme sujet, Mr. Mason, digne ami de Mr. Gray. C'est avec plaisir que je rends justice à quantité de beaux vers qui distinguent cet ouvrage; mais je déclare que longtems avant d'avoir lu le poëme de Mr. Mason j'avois composé le mien, et l'avois recité dans plusieurs séances publiques de l'Académie Françoise et du Collége Royal, auxquels j'avois l'honneur d'appartenir."*

It is somewhat remarkable that the only two poems of any considerable value to which so kindred a subject as the art of embellishing grounds has given birth, should have come before the public nearly at the same time; for though the first book of the "English Garden"

* Preface, p. viii.

was published in 1772, the fourth and last did not appear until 1782, the very year when the first impression of "Les Jardins," issued from the Parisian press; and it is probable, therefore, from what the Abbé has said in the passage just quoted, that if the conception of the English poem, and a part of its execution, were anterior to that of the French work, the larger portion of both must have been written during the same period; a parallelism which must, of course, as far as it obtained, preclude all idea of imitation, though from the identity of design which occupied the minds of the two poets, its appearance could scarcely be avoided.

But returning to the more immediate subject of my paper, the Anonymous Translation of 1789, I think it right to observe that, in conducting a suite of extracts from its pages, it will be my plan, after commenting slightly on the merits of the version, to endeavour to introduce what may, in some measure, serve, through the medium of comparison, remark, or historical disquisition, to illustrate the subject or sentiment of the original.

In a short, but elegantly written, prefatory ad-

dress to his readers, the translator indulges in a slight but pleasing retrospect of what taste and genius had contributed toward the praise and the improvement of his favourite art, observing that the amateur in landscape "will admire, but without regret, the few faint touches etched by HOMER, and by VIRGIL: he will view and pass the luxurious, but fantastic recess of PLINY, to approve, to feel, to envy, the better taste of TULLY in the shades of the more natural Tusculum: he will warm and enrich his imagination with the brilliant enchantments of TASSO and ARIOSTO, with the fond fancies of CHAUCER and SPENSER, with the Paradise of MILTON: he will correct his judgment with the critical lessons of BACON, of TEMPLE, and of POPE, with the various designs of WATELET and MOREL, with the chaste touches of MASON, and the judicious illustrations of BURGH. Thus, with a mind taught to admire, and willing to imitate the fair forms of genuine nature, he will ever follow obedient to the 'Genius of the Place,' and, as situation may suggest, either walk with the cautious KENT, or tread the fairy footsteps of BROWN."

In this birds-eye view of the progress of his art, the translator has omitted two writers whose influence on the improvement of landscape gardening had been of the most marked and decided kind, namely, WHATELY and GIRARDIN. The former in his "*Observations on Modern Gardening*," published in 1770, had exhibited, together with a taste singularly pure and correct, *the most exquisite talents for delineating* (for the embellishment of rural scenery,) its varied features and effect; whilst the latter, in his essay "*De la Composition des Paysages, ou des Moyens d'embellir la Nature autour des Habitations, en joignant l'agréable à l'utile, &c.*" first printed in 1777, and translated by Mr. Malthus, with an admirable introduction in 1783, and which so beautifully describes his own romantic creation at Ermenonville, had proved how effectively he could transfer to unimproved nature the finest conceptions of the great masters of painting, and with what eloquence he could describe their result.

It may be remarked, that at the time when the paragraph we are commenting upon was written, *Brown* was in the zenith of his reputa-

tion, and had, but a very few years before, received from the pen of Mason an eulogy which the lapse of half a century has shown to have been written more in the spirit of poetry than of prophecy. We meet with it at the close of his interesting review of the progress of gardening in England, where, after mentioning Shenstone,

Who knew, perchance, to harmonize his shades
Still softer than his song,

he adds,

Him too, the living leader of thy powers,
Great Nature! him the Muse shall hail in notes
Which antedate the praise true Genius claims
From just posterity: bards yet unborn
Shall pay to BROWN that tribute, fitliest paid
In strains, the beauty of his scenes inspire.

Brown, who had been brought up a kitchen gardener near Woodstock, and had been afterwards head-gardener at Stowe until the year 1750, was, without doubt a man of considerable talents, as his Blenheim has amply proved; but he was deficient in a knowledge of picturesque

beauty; and the result was, that he became too much of a mannerist, and when his system of belting and clumping had fallen into the hands of a herd of imitators, nothing could be more monotonous and insipid than the scenery which was daily creating from one end of the kingdom to the other; the two great agents, wood and water, which should naturally have produced a never-ceasing variety, being now seen only under prescribed forms, the former presenting but the belt, the clump, or the single tree, and the latter assuming, however different might be the situation, one uniform shape and character.

Such a system, it is evident, could not last long; for though it was upheld for a time by the ingenuity and resources of Humphrey Repton, who used to term Brown "his great self-taught predecessor," it fell, about the year 1794, before the attack of Payne Knight, and Uvedale Price, the former in his "Landscape, a Poem," and the latter in his "Essays on the Picturesque," endeavouring to establish the art of landscape gardening on the principles of painting, "not," as Price justly observed, "to the exclusion of nature, but as an assistant in the study of her works."

Nothing, certainly, could be better adapted to introduce the variety and the freedom which were now so much wanted in the art, than the plan thus recommended,* provided it were adopted with a due attention to congruity and utility; and its influence, in fact, on the public mind soon became such, as, though opposed at first by nearly all the disciples of Brown, and especially by Repton, who entered into a public controversy with Price on the subject, it speedily effected a very desirable change in the aspect of our decorated scenery, and even finally brought over its warmest opponents; the latter works of Repton, who continued to publish until 1817, partaking much more of what might entitle him to be considered a disciple of Price than of his former venerated master.

The study, however, of the finest artists in landscape painting, of Rosa, Ruysdale, Poussin, and Claude, with a view to the transference of their beauties to living scenery, must, unless under the guidance of a correct judgment, and great good sense, often produce a display of wild, fantastic, and discordant parts, tenfold more disgusting than even the monotonous out-

lines of Brown; and such, indeed, has not unfrequently been the case; for, where it has been forgotten that grounds should be laid out not exclusively with a view to pictorial effect, but with a direct reference in many of their features to the personal use, and comfort, and enjoyment of the proprietor, what but affectation and inaccordancy must ensue? In fact, it should be ever held in mind, that the grounds immediately adjoining the mansion should, in a greater or less degree, partake of the style and character of its age and architecture. If the house be an old one, or built to assume the appearance of antiquity, assuredly a correct taste would preserve, or create, around it a style of gardening correspondent with its time-worn aspect; and the avenue, the alley, the terrace, and parterre, would here find their proper place; whilst, if the character of the country should admit of it, the more distant parts of the domain, where nature is expected to be perfectly free from control, might exhibit all that a picturesque imagination could conceive and execute;

All that *Lorraine* light, touch'd with soft'ning hue,
Or savage *Rosa* dash'd, or learned *Poussin* drew.

If, on the contrary, the mansion be in the modern style of architecture, still the home-grounds, whilst they partake of the more free, cheerful, and disengaged character of the building, should exhibit, though without any offensive intrusion of art, evident traces of their adaptation to the pleasures and comforts of domestic life. Harmony, therefore, and softness, and a certain degree of regular beauty, though not unmingled with the charms of a varying outline, should be studied here, and not picturesque effect; this, as in the former instance, being reserved for scenery less immediately connected with the business and the pursuits of man. It is this want of attention to propriety, to the beauty resulting from adaptation, utility, and a due subserviency to the purposes of habitation, which has rendered so many attempts towards creating picturesque effect not only extravagant, but ridiculous; and which occasioned Dugald Stewart, several years ago, to observe, in relation to the new system of Messrs. Knight and Price: "As to the application of the knowledge acquired from the study of paintings, to the improvement of natural landscape, I have

no doubt, that to a superior understanding and taste, like those of Price, it may often suggest very useful hints; but if recognised as the standard to which the ultimate appeal is to be made, it would infallibly cover the face of the country with a new and systematical species of affectation, not less remote than that of Brown, from the style of gardening which he wishes to recommend;" and he then adds, in a vein of good sense which should never be forgotten, "Let painting be allowed its due praise in quickening our attention to the beauties of nature; in multiplying our resources for their farther embellishment; and in holding up a standard, from age to age, to correct the caprices of fashionable innovations; but let our taste for these beauties be chiefly formed on the study of nature herself; nor let us ever forget so far what is due to her indisputable and salutary prerogative, as to attempt an encroachment upon it by laws, which derive the whole of their validity from her own sanction."

Fortunately a taste for the study of nature, as she is to be seen in this country, under all her most pleasing and picturesque forms, had

been established in the public mind just anterior to the introduction of the system of Price, and principally through the efforts of Gilpin, whose numerous picturesque tours had not only rendered every well-educated man familiar with the principles of landscape-painting; but had induced all who possessed the means and the opportunity, to visit the scenes which he had so admirably described, and to study nature for themselves at the fountain head; a fashion, which whilst it precluded the probability of any extensive return to the formal, insipid, and indiscriminate arrangements of the followers of Brown, men totally devoid of the inventive talents of their master, secured, at the same time, such a sincere and just admiration of the great archetype of all beauty and sublimity, as to prevent any very frequent or injurious submission to the caprices of art and the dictates of mannerism; painting being only so far adopted as a guide, as she has shown, through the medium of her best artists, the rare attainment of *selecting*, *grouping* and *combining* happily, from the varied stores around her. It is exclusively to this mode of deriving assistance from the sister art,

that our two didactic poets on landscape gardening most emphatically point; at the same time ever holding up to view the grand truth, that the rules which they, after the example of the great masters of the pencil have found it requisite to adopt, have been primarily dictated, and occasionally carried into execution, by Nature herself. Thus De Lille in reference to this very characteristic of genius in the schools of painting, tells his aspirant to fame in the art of embellishing living scenery,

Ainsi savoient choisir les Berghems, les Poussins.
Voyez, étudier leurs chefs-d'œuvres divins:
Et ce qu' à la campagne emprunta la peinture,
Que l'art reconnoissant le rende à la nature.
Chant i.

and Mason still more minutely and explicitly:

If yet thy art be dubious how to treat
Nature's neglected features, turn thy eye
To those, the masters of correct design,
Who, from her vast variety, have cull'd
The loveliest, boldest parts, and new arranged;
Yet, as herself approv'd, herself inspired.
In their immortal works thou ne'er shalt find

Dull uniformity, contrivance quaint,
Or labour'd littleness; but contrasts broad,
And careless lines, whose undulating forms
Play thro' the varied canvass: these transplant
Again on Nature; take thy plastic spade,
It is thy pencil; take thy seeds, thy plants,
They are thy colours; and by these repay
With interest every charm she lent thy art.
Book i. l. 264.

In thus reviewing the two systems of embellishing grounds which have prevailed in this country, and to which we have been led by the remarks of the anonymous translator of De Lille, it is by no means our wish to deny, that the eulogistic notice of Brown with which these remarks conclude, or the still more laudatory tribute of the poet of the English Garden, was not, in many instances, justly merited. He whom Whately and Mason admired, could not be an ordinary man, and, in fact, Brown possessed much of the "fairy" fancy of the genuine bard; but notwithstanding all his devotion to, and enthusiasm for, nature, he ultimately became too fond of dictating to her in an arbitrary manner, and of tricking her out in a style too uni-

formly limited and refined; nor could the gentlemen we have just mentioned have formed any idea of the enormous extent to which, through the medium of insulated clumping, and circular belting, these defects were to be exaggerated and carried by a swarm of tasteless disciples; for it is evident from the writings of both, and especially from the extract just given from Mason, that in their contemplation the only legitimate mode of improving nature was to be derived from sources which forbade all littleness, circumscription, and obtrusive uniformity. It has been thought necessary to add thus much in relation to this once fashionable director of landscape gardening, as he has continued to be, even to the present day, a subject for indiscriminate censure, or too lavish praise.

After these preliminary, though somewhat copious, and, perhaps, rather digressional, observations on the progress and manner of embellishing grounds in England, but which the very nature of the subject almost forced upon us, let us again turn a more undivided attention towards the earliest effort which was made to naturalise in this country the noblest production

on the art of which the continent can boast. Much and deservedly as the English Garden of Mason has been praised for the justness of its precepts, and the beauty of its execution, for the purity of its taste, and the general simplicity of its style, the extracts we are about to give from the forgotten version of the French bard, if they do but bear out the character we have ventured to assign them, will sufficiently prove to the English reader, that in these respects the sister poem of De Lille is little, if at all, inferior, whilst in variety and richness of illustration, it is certainly more abundant.

These encomia, however, let it be recollected, can only apply, as far as the version is concerned, to the *selections* which we shall make from its pages, and that, as a *whole*, the translation has no pretensions to the praise which is due to the singular beauty and spirit with which some of its parts have been finished.

In the ensuing number, therefore, after a few brief remarks on the subject matter of the first book of "Les Jardins," we shall commence our series of quotations, taking care in every instance,

and in the first place, to give the original, that those who are acquainted with the French language, may have an opportunity of judging not only of the merits of the extracts as English poetry, but of their fidelity as translations.

No. V.

Here strive for empire, o'er the happy scene,
The nymphs of fountain, sea, and woodland green;
The power of grace and beauty holds the prize
Suspended even to her votaries,
And finds amazed, where'er she casts her eye,
Their contest forms the matchless harmony.

PAULUS SILENTIARIUS, *apud Bland.*

THE first book of the Gardens of De Lille is principally occupied in teaching how to borrow and combine with the happiest skill and effect, the richest materials of picturesque beauty; how best, in fact, to convert the scene to be embellished into a perfect and appropriate and harmonious whole; by consulting beyond all things the genius of the place, and so adapting the operations of art to the peculiarities of the site, as to hide its defects, and call forth all its advantages; a subject which naturally leads to a consideration of the different species of landscapes and of gardens.

After a few preliminary lines, in which the

author commemorates the return of Spring, and speaks with well-founded rapture of the happy subject he had chosen, he thus proceeds to invoke the assistance of the Didactic Muse.

Toi donc, qui, mariant la grâce à la vigueur,
Sais du chant didactique animer la langueur,
O Muse ! si jadis, dans les vers de Lucrèce,
Des austères leçons tu polis la rudesse ;
Si par toi, sans flétrir, le langage des dieux,
Son rival a chanté le soc laborieux ;
Viens orner un sujet plus riche, plus fertile,
Dont le charme autrefois avoit tenté Virgile.
N'empruntons point ici d'ornement étranger ;
Viens, de mes propres fleurs mon front va s'ombrager ;
Et, comme un rayon par colore un beau nuage,
Des couleurs du sujet je tiendrai mon langage.
L'art innocent et doux que célèbrent mes vers,
Remonte aux premiers jours de l'antique univers.
Dès que l'homme eut soumis les champs à la culture,
D'un heureux coin de terre il soigna la parure ;
Et plus près de ses yeux il rangea sous ses loix
Des arbres favoris et des fleurs de son choix.
Des simple Alcinoüs le luxe encore rustique
Décoroit un verger. D'un art plus magnifique
Babylone éleva des jardins dans les airs.

Chant i.

Beautiful as these lines certainly are, the following version of them, especially that part of it which is distinguished by *italics*, must, if I am not greatly mistaken, be pronounced equal in point of melody, and superior in point of poetic expression.

Come then, O Muse! that oft in union sweet,
Bid'st gentle grace and warmest vigour meet,
To animate the lesson's languid lore;
If e'er Lucretius bless'd thy aid of yore,
If, fir'd by thee, in high celestial lays,
His rival sung the ploughshare's useful praise:
A richer subject now invites thy voice,
A theme once bless'd by Virgil's happy choice.
Here let no foreign ornament be found,
With my own garland let my brow be crown'd.
Lo! where the lustre-beaming star of day
Gilds yonder evening cloud with purest ray;
So shall my verse reflect a brighter gleam,
Tinged with the colours of my lovely theme.
The gentle art, that now adorns my lays,
Was dear to infant Nature's golden days.
When lab'ring man first tam'd the stubborn soil,
One little happy corner bless'd his toil.
Where by his hands arranged, in order grew
His chosen trees, his fav'rite flow'rets blew.

Hence in Alcinoüs' blooming orchard shone
The simple lux'ry of a rustic throne;
Hence with stupendous art, upraised on high,
Thy gardens, Babylon, assail'd the sky.

A garden, which Bacon has justly termed the purest of all human pleasures, appears to have been also the most ancient. The garden of Alcinoüs is certainly, as De Lille has remarked, in a note to his introductory lines, a precious monument of the antiquity and history of gardens, and clearly one of the earliest productions of infant art; but we possess one yet anterior, and, if tradition be correct in pointing out its site, one that, from its very situation, must have included much of picturesque as well as of regular beauty. I allude to the garden of King Solomon, slightly mentioned in Ecclesiastes, and delineated more at length, through the medium of comparison, in the Song of Songs, of which latter description the following is an admirable version by my friend Dr. Good:

My bride! my love! in thee perfection meets;
A garden art thou, fill'd with matchless sweets:
A garden wall'd, those matchless sweets to shield;
A spring inclosed, a fountain fresh and seal'd;

A paradise of plants — where all unite,
Dear to the smell, the palate, or the sight;
Of rich pomegranates, that at random blow;
Cypress and nard, in fragrant gales that flow;
Nard, saffron, cinnamon, the dulcet airs,
Deep through its canes, the calamus prepares;
The scented aloes, and each shrub that showers
Gums from its veins, and spices from its flowers;—
O pride of gardens! fount of endless sweets!
Well-spring of all in Lebanon that meets!—
Awake, O North-wind! come, thou Southern breeze!
Blow on my garden, and refresh its trees.*

Of the supposed site of this lovely Oriental garden, Maundrell, towards the close of the seventeenth century (1696), has given us, in his account of Bethlehem and its vicinity, a very curious and interesting detail. "The first place that we directed our course to," he says, "was those famous fountains, pools, and gardens, which were the contrivance and delight of King Solomon, alluded to Eccles. ii. 5, 6. About the distance of an hundred and forty paces from

* Song of Songs: or Sacred Idyls. Translated from the original Hebrew, with Notes, critical and explanatory. By John Mason Good. 1803. pp. 28, 29.

these pools is the FOUNTAIN from which they principally derive their waters. This the friars told us was the SEALED FOUNTAIN, to which the *Holy Spouse* is compared, Cant. iv. 19.; and they pretend a tradition that King Solomon SHUT UP THESE SPRINGS, and kept the door of them SEALED with his SIGNET, to preserve the waters for his own drinking in their natural freshness and purity. Nor was it difficult thus to secure them, they rising under ground, and having no avenue to them but a little hole, like the mouth of a narrow well. These waters wind along through two rooms cut out of the solid rock, which are arched over with stone arches, very ancient, perhaps the work of Solomon himself. Below, the pool runs down a *narrow rocky valley, inclosed on both sides with high mountains*; this, they told us, was the INCLOSED GARDEN alluded to in the same song." *

Thus situated, it was scarcely possible to be otherwise than pleasing and romantic; but a still more striking illustration of its character and beauties, may be drawn from the consider-

* Good's Song of Songs, p. 124.

ation that it was intended by Solomon as a direct imitation of what he had seen within the recesses of Lebanon,

Well-spring of all in Lebanon that meets!

and the commentators almost invariably point to the following passage in Maundrell as painting the very scene which the monarch was anxious to emulate. "There is," says the traveller, "a very deep rupture in the side of Libanus, running at least seven hours travel directly up into the mountain. It is on both sides exceedingly steep and high, clothed with fragrant greens from top to bottom, and every where refreshed with fountains falling down from the rocks in pleasant cascades—the ingenious work of nature. The streams all uniting at the bottom, make a full and rapid torrent, whose agreeable murmuring is heard all over the place, and adds no small pleasure to it."* This is, in fact, a scene which contains within its own bosom nearly all the constituents of picturesque beauty, and in serving as a model to the Jewish sove-

* Good's Song of Songs, p. 127.

reign, could scarcely fail to infuse, however mingled with the features of art, much of its peculiar wild character and charm.

In general, however, gardening among the ancients, especially amongst the Greeks and Romans, was limited as in the gardens of Alcinoüs and Laertes in Homer, to the production of herbs, and fruits, and flowers; and if among the opulent, effect were aimed at, it was that resulting from undisguised art, from geometric order and architectural symmetry. Not that the inhabitants of Greece and Italy were in the slightest degree deficient in a just taste for the beauties of natural scenery, as their best writers have sufficiently proved; but as, in fact, the country around them was a perfect landscape in nature's most alluring dress, such indeed as our parks and pleasure-grounds can but faintly rival, novelty and contrast were sought after almost necessarily, by the introduction of artificial, and correctly regular forms, so that in the most flourishing period of the Roman empire, the gardens or pleasure grounds of the consul Pliny, exhibited not only terraces, parterres, and water-works, but even trees sheared and

dressed into a multitude of whimsical and grotesque forms, bearing a strong resemblance to what, in this country was the fashionable style of gardening in the reign of William and Mary.

It would appear, indeed, that in proportion as the gardens of the ancients became more ornamented and magnificent, in the like proportion they deviated from nature; and that it was only in the very circumscribed grounds of the man of small property, where economy and simplicity were to be studied, that she was left in any degree free and unshackled. Such a retreat had been the dearest wish of Horace,

> Hortus ubi, et tecto vicinus jugis aquæ fons,
> Et paulum silvæ super his foret;

and such was the garden of the old Corycian planter, so exquisitely described by Virgil, a picture not to be contemplated without the utmost complacency and delight, and from which, contrary to the avowal of the anonymous translator of De Lille, it is, I think, scarcely possible to part, without deeply regretting, that the bard had not made gardening the express subject of a separate poem, notwithstanding it is probable

that the celebration of this, his favourite theme, might, as far as strictly related to the art itself, have been confined to the production of fruits and flowers; yet with what never-to-be-forgotten episodes would not the genius of Virgil have diversified such a subject. As it is, the transient sketch which he has given us, is, beyond all comparison, the most pleasing and interesting delineation of a garden to be found in the whole compass of ancient poetry; and as such, and as alluded to in the extract from De Lille, I shall be pardoned, I trust, introducing it here in by far the best version to which, in any nation, the inimitable original has given birth. The poet is naturally led into the subject whilst recommending the breathing sweets of the garden, as the means best calculated to invite the roving bees to settle, and he then adds, in a tone of tender regret, which cannot fail to excite a similar emotion in the minds of his readers, —

Ah fav'rite scenes! but now with gather'd sail
I seek the shore, nor trust th' inviting gale;
Else had my song your charms at leisure traced,
And all the garden's varied arts embraced;

Sung, twice each year, how Pæstan roses blow,
How endive drinks the rill that purls below,
How trailing gourds pursue their mazy way,
Swell as they creep, and widen into day;
How verdant celery decks its humid bed,
How late blown flow'rets round narcissus spread;
The lithe acanthus and the ivy hoar,
And myrtle blooming on the sea-beat shore.
Yes, I remember, where Galæsus leads
His flood dark winding through the golden meads,
Where proud Œbalia's tow'rs o'erlook the plain,
Once I beheld an old Corycian swain;
Lord of a little spot, by all disdain'd,
Where never lab'ring yoke subsistence gain'd,
Where never shepherd gave his flock to feed,
Nor Bacchus dared to trust th' ungrateful mead.
He there with scanty herbs the bushes crown'd
And planted lilies, vervain, poppies, round;
Nor envied kings, when late, at twilight close,
Beneath his peaceful shed he sought repose,
And cull'd from earth, with changeful plenty stored,
Th' unpurchased feasts that piled his varied board.
At spring-tide first he pluck'd the full-blown rose,
From autumn first the ripen'd apple chose;
And e'en when winter split the rocks with cold,
And chain'd th' o'erhanging torrent as it roll'd,
His blooming hyacinths, ne'er known to fail,

Shed sweets unborrow'd of the vernal gale,
As 'mid their rifled beds he wound his way,
Chid the slow sun and zephyr's long delay.
Hence first his bees new swarms unnumber'd gave,
And press'd from richest combs the golden wave;
Limes round his haunts diffused a grateful shade,
And verdant pines with many a cone array'd;
And every bud, that gemm'd the vernal spray,
Swell'd into fruit beneath th' autumnal ray.
He lofty elms transposed in order placed,
Luxuriant pears at will his alleys graced,
And grafted thorns that blushing plums display'd,
And planes that stretch'd o'er summer feasts their shade.
"Ah! fav'rite scenes! to other bards resign'd,
I leave your charms, and trace my task assign'd.

SOTHEBY. *

Returning, however, from this digression to a further exemplification of the merits of our anonymous translator, I have great pleasure in bringing forward an extract which must, I think, with every one who is alive to the charms of poetic language and melody, place the occa-

* *Georgic.* lib. iv.
Atque equidem, extremo ni jam sub fine laborum. v. 116.
ad
Pretereo, atque aliis post me memoranda relinquo. v. 148.

sional felicity with which this version is executed, in the most striking point of view. The original, after asserting the possibility of calling forth beauties even from the most apparently barren and hopeless site, thus proceeds to show in what manner this magic result is to be effected.

Le sol le plus ingrat connoîtra la beauté.
Est il nud? que des bois parent sa nudité:
Couvert? portez la hache en ses forêts profondes:
Humide? en lacs pompeux, en rivières fécondes
Changez cette onde impure; et par d'heureux travaux,
Corrigez à la fois l'air, la terre et les eaux:
Aride enfin? cherchez, sondez, fouillez encore;
L'eau, lente à se trahir, peut-être est près d'éclore.
Il est des soins plus doux, un art plus enchanteur.
C'est peu de charmer l'œil, il faut parler au cœur.
Avez-vous donc connu ces rapports invisibles
Des corps inanimés et des êtres sensibles?
Avez-vous entendu des eaux, des prés, des bois,
La muette éloquence et la secrète voix?
Rendez-nous ces effets. Que du riant au sombre,
Du noble au gracieux, les passages sans nombre,
M'intéressent toujours. Simple et grand, fort et doux,
Unissez-tous les tons, pour plaire à tous les goûts.

Là, que le peintre vienne enrichir sa palette;
Que l'inspiration y trouble le poëte
Que le sage, du calme y goûte les douceurs;
L'heureux, ses souvenirs; le malheureux, ses pleurs.'
Chant i.

To render justice to these lines, exhibiting, as they do, a great and almost equal share of sweetness, energy, and grace, must, it is evident, require talents of no common order. How the demand has been answered by our translator it will be a delightful as well as an easy task to show. I think it right, however, to premise, that in the first paragraph of the subsequent version, I have taken the liberty of transposing a single couplet.

The wildest waste with warmest charms may glow;
A shady robe o'er naked Nature throw;
Where'er immured she lies in gloomy night,
Quick let the axe admit the beaming light;
Where stagnant fens in putrid torpor sleep,
Let lakes spread wide, or fertile rivers sweep;
If dry the site, search, dig, explore the soil,
Where least you hope the bubbling fount may boil;
Thus o'er the ground your hands shall plenty show'r,
And health shall glow where sickness pined before.

Nor charm the eye alone; with nobler art
Awake the soul, and interest the heart.
Do you the viewless ties of being know,
That link the chain of Nature here below?
Have you the silent music understood
That breathes around from hill, and vale, and flood?
That music we require, from grave to gay,
From bold to fair let just transition stray.
Be grand or simple, be sublime or chaste,
Each tone unite, and charm each various taste.
The canvass thence shall drink a richer dye,
The bard there burn with inspiration high,
Till his rapt eyes in finer frenzy roll;
There shall the sage to peace becalm his soul;
Remember'd joys the happy heart shall cheer,
And the wretch fe . the luxury of a tear.

Of this very highly finished and interesting extract, the concluding couplet of the first paragraph, whilst it gives the general import of the French, is at the same time, both in its imagery and sentiment, a noble and truly poetical expansion of the original; an eulogium which will apply with perhaps still more force and propriety to the last six lines of the second portion, which need not indeed fear a comparison, as to beauty of expression and harmony

of construction, with the most artfully polished couplets of our best bards. Nor can I leave the passage without briefly noticing the very finely-sustained contrast which subsists between its two parts; the first triplet, as well in diction as in thought, breathing a tone of deep and lofty enthusiasm; whilst the second steals upon the heart with a tender and subduing melody, and touches, at its close, one of pity's sweetest chords.

After these cursory remarks on the merits of the version, it would be unpardonable to pass by the admirable doctrine of the original, which teaches us, that landscape gardening is not, in its highest aim, necessarily limited to the exclusive production of the picturesque, to the mere harmony of forms and colours, lights and shades, but that it may, under the guidance of a feeling and poetic mind, successfully appeal to the heart, calling forth those emotions and associations which, through the medium of cheerfulness or tenderness, grandeur or sublimity, hallow and endear its scenery.

The circumstances and arrangements most conducive to the excitement of these impressions, are then entered into; and the foremost place is

given to the magic influence of *motion*, without which, whatever may be the effect aimed at, all will be monotonous and insipid. The translator has here again most happily succeeded in sustaining the spirit of the Gallic bard, and he imperatively calls upon me, therefore, for the transference of the passage to these pages.

Surtout du mouvement : —
Des grands peintres encor faut-il attester l'art ?
Voyez-les prodiguer, de leur pinceau fertile,
De mobiles objets sur la toile immobile,
L'onde qui fuit, le vent qui courbe les rameaux,
Les globes de fumée, exalés des hameaux,
Les troupeaux, les pasteurs, et leurs jeux et leur
    danse ;
Saisissez leur secret, plantez en abondance
Ces souples arbrisseaux, et ces arbres mouvans,
Dont la tête obéit à l'haleine des vents : —
Là du sommet lointain des voches buissoneuses,
Je vois la chèvre pendre ; ici, de mille agneaux
L'echo porte les cris de coteaux en coteaux,
Dans ces prés abreuvés des eaux de la colline,
Couché sur ses genoux, le bœuf pesant rumine ;
Tandis qu'impétueux, fier, inquiet, ardent,
Cet animal guerrier qu'enfanta le trident,

Déploie, en se jouant, dans un gras pâturage,
Sa vigueur indomptée et sa grâce sauvage.
Que j'aime et sa souplesse et son port animé;
Soit que dans le courant du fleuve accoutumé
En frissonnant il plonge, et luttant contre l'onde,
Batte du pied le flot qui blanchit et qui gronde;
Soit qu'à travers les prés il s'echappe par bonds;
Soit que, livrant aux vents ses longs crins vagabonds,
Superbe, l'œil en feu, les narines fumantes,
Beau d'orgueil et d'amour, il vole à ses amantes;
Quand je ne le vois plus, mon œil le suit encor.

Chant i.

Be motion first your care:—
Lo! living graces from the pencil flow!
See the stiff canvass warm with motion glow!
Swift flies the flood, the waving branches bend,
And from the cot the wreaths of smoke ascend,
Wide roam the herds, the shepherds dance and play,
And all the finish'd piece with life is gay!
This secret seize, and 'mid each verdant vale,
Plant shrubs, plant trees, that bow to ev'ry gale,—
And fling a fluctuating gloom around:—
There on the distant crag o'erhung with wood,
The trembling goat may browse his scanty food;
Or here a thousand lambs with bleating shrill,
The babbling echoes wake from hill to hill;

Or cumbrous oxen ruminate, beside
The mountain-streams that thro' the meadows glide.
While proudly festive, in the fertile vale,
The trident's warrior offspring snuffs the gale;
What savage grace his vig'rous limbs display,
When fierce, impetuous, wild he bounds away!
I love his courage, when, in frantic mood,
He plunges deep amid the flashing flood,
And struggling spurns the torrent's headlong course,
That roars and foams around with thund'ring force.
And when each sinew trembles with desire,
His nostrils smoke, his eye-balls blaze with fire,
When to the wind loose streams his flowing mane,
And love and pride swell high in ev'ry vein,
And to his joys he flies, my eyes pursue,
Ev'n when his lightning speed no more I view.

With an equal degree of felicity has our translator transfused another kindred, and immediately subsequent, injunction of his original, which, after dwelling for some time on the infinite and ever-changing beauties to be derived to landscape gardening from the mere principle of motion, adds, that the eye delights no less in an air of perfect liberty, and that in the embellishment of grounds, all appearance of narrow confine or limit should be sedulously avoided,

illustrating the position by a well-drawn picture of the disgusting effect of the contrary practice, as yet occasionally to be seen in the dull and obtrusively circumscribed domains of our feudal ancestors :—

Quand toujours guerroyant vos gothiques ancêtres
Transformoient en champ clos leurs asiles cham-
pêtres,
Chacun dans son donjon, de murs environné.
Pour vivre sûrement, vivoit emprisonné,
Mais que fait aujourd'hui cette ennuyeuse enceinte
Que conserve l'orgueil et qu'inventa la crainte?
A ces murs qui gênoient, attristoient les regards,
Le goût préféroit ces verdoyants remparts,
Ces murs tissus d'épine, où votre main tremblante
Cueille ou la rose inculte, on la mûre sanglante.
Chant i.

Our Gothic sires, by wars unceasing storm'd,
Their rural mansions into camps transform'd;
Each chief secure from rude alarms to dwell,
Lurk'd in a dreary dungeon's gloomy cell.
But say what end each dull entrenchment serves,
That fear erected, and that pride preserves?
To walls that frown o'erhung with dismal gloom,
True taste prefers those mounds of various bloom,
Where the fringed thorn its purple fruit bestows,
And the hand trembles as it plucks the rose.

One of the most decisive proofs of taste and skill in the creation of scenery, is shown in the happiness and facility with which the accidental features of art or nature are made to blend with the landscape you are about to form; and, accordingly, the French poet insists upon this as among the first accomplishments of him who aims at picturesque effect; pointing out at the same time how best he may avail himself of the neighbouring bridge or cottage, town or spire; or of the windings of the adjacent stream, or the vicinity of the magnificent ocean. In doing this, however, he cannot but regret how seldom nature, time, and art, and man, combine to bring the richest accidents of landscape, and with their happiest result, before us; a sentiment which naturally carries the imagination of the bard to regions more fortunate in these respects than our own, and he apostrophises the classic realms of Greece and Rome in strains, which have been naturalised in the pages of our anonymous version, with a taste, a feeling, and enthusiasm, which may vie with the tone and execution of the original.

O plaines de la Grèce ! ô champs de l'Ausonie !
Lieux toujours inspirans, toujours chers au génie ;
Que de fois, arrêté dans un bel horizon,
Le peintre voit, s'enflamme, et saisit son crayon,
Dessine ces lointains, et ces mers, et ces îles,
Ces ports, ces monts brûlans et devenus fertiles,
Des laves de ces monts encor tout menaçans,
Sur des palais détruits d'autres palais naissans,
Et, dans ce long tourment de la terre et de l'onde,
Un nouveau monde éclos des débris du vieux monde!
Helas ! je n'ai point vu ce sejour enchanté,
Ces beaux lieux où Virgile a tant de fois chanté;
Mais, j'en jure et Virgile, et ses accords sublimes,
J'irai, de l'Apennin je franchirai les cimes ;
J'irai, plein de son nom, plein de ses vers sacrés,
Les lire aux mêmes lieux qui les ont inspirés.

Chant. i.*

Ye vales of Greece ! ye dear Ausonian groves !
Inspiring haunts, that genius ever loves !
How oft, enchanted by your blushing skies,
The painter feels his glowing raptures rise!

* These lines, which form part of the first book of "Les Jardins," in the earlier editions, were afterwards transferred to the latter part of the second, and occupy the same place in the most recent impressions. I have given them here, however, as their version occurs as a part of the first book of the anonymous translation of 1789.

Draws the rich landscape, and the sea and isles,
The ports, and burning hills where plenty smiles
There lavas fierce their flaming torrents pour!
From ruins old there rising temples tow'r!
From sea and land in rude confusion hurl'd,
There into being bursts a new-born world!

Alas! I've never rov'd those vales among,
Where Virgil whilom tun'd his sacred song;
But by the bard I swear, and lay sublime,
I'll go! O'er Alps on Alps oppos'd I'll climb;
Full of his name, with all his frenzy fir'd,
There will I read the strains those beauteous scenes
inspir'd.

In quoting the latter part of this version some years ago in my Literary Hours, I took the liberty of slightly altering the concluding line; converting it, for the sake of a little more harmony and energy, into an Alexandrine; a licence of which I have continued to avail myself in the present paper.*

Immediately subsequent to the passage I have just given, De Lille enters into a consideration of

* Literary Hours, vol. ii, p. 236. 4th edition.

the then two rival modes of laying out grounds in France; the gorgeously symmetrical, as planned by the skill of Le Notre; and the simply and wildly natural, as taught by our celebrated countryman Kent; and whilst doing this, and referring to the royal seats of Marly and Versailles, as the most splendid specimens of the first of these modes, he brings forward an allusion to the magic creations of Ariosto and Tasso, and deems them rivalled, if not surpassed, by the wonder-working hand of Le Notre. But we should here, in justice, recollect, that, notwithstanding this appeal, it is, perhaps, to Tasso's description of the gardens of Armida, that we are indebted for the first, and, doubtless, the best precept, towards the formation of natural and picturesque scenery; namely, to imitate nature in such a manner, that the art by which the resemblance is achieved should be totally concealed from view. The passage is so pre-eminent in beauty, and so vitally essential in its bearing to the very existence of landscape-gardening, that I cannot resist the temptation of introducing it here; especially when it is recollected how influential it necessarily must have been in

the production of a purer taste; and when I further add, that it forms, as it were, a very apposite prelude to the close of the first book of the earlier editions of "Les Jardins," which introduces a celebration of the Paradise of Milton, an episode of which the greater part has been admirably rendered by our anonymous translator. Tasso may be considered, indeed, in the following stanza, as the very parent and herald of the art he has so beautifully described:

Poi che lasciar' gli avviluppati calli,
In lieto aspetto il bel giardin s'aperse.
Acque stagnanti, mobili cristalli,
Fior varj, e varie piante, erbe diverse,
Apriche collinette, ombrose valli,
Selve e spelonche in una vista offerse.
E quel, che'l bello e'l caro accresce all' opre,
L'arte, che tutto fa, nulla si scopre.
Gerusalemme Liberata, Cant. xvi. Stanz. 9.

When through the lab'rinth they had made their way,
Before their eyes the lovely garden lay.
Still lakes of silver, streams that murmuring crept,
Hills, on whose sloping brows the sunbeams slept,
Luxuriant trees, that various forms display'd,
And valleys, grateful with refreshing shade,

Herbs, flow'rets gay with many a gaudy dye,
And woods, and arching grottoes met their eye.
What more than all enhanc'd those beauties rare,
Though art was all in all, no sign of art were there.

HUNT.

From these lines, most assuredly, did Spenser learn to

call in Art
Only to second Nature, and supply
All that the nymph forgot, or left forlorn: *

and from the same source did Milton catch the first hint of that work

where not nice Art in curious knots,
But Nature boon pour'd forth on hill and dale
Flowers worthy of Paradise; while all around
Umbrageous grots, and caves of cool recess,
And murmuring waters down the slope dispers'd,
Or held, by fringed banks, in crystal lakes,
Compose a rural seat of various view. †

And from the forced display of art which De Lille has just been recording in the regal gar-

* Mason's English Garden, Book i. l. 445.

† English Garden, Book i. l. 453.; see also, Paradise Lost, Book iv. l. 241 to 264, part of which passage is here inserted.

dens of France, does he turn, with all a lover's yearning. to this exquisitely natural picture of our inspired countryman. It is a passage which seems to breathe fresh charms from the graceful simplicity of its English dress. Tired of the glare of obtrusive splendour, the poet calls for what may touch the answering heart, and he tells us,

Aimez donc des jardins la beauté naturelle;
Dieu lui-même aux mortels en traça le modèle.
Regardez dans Milton, quand ses puissantes mains
Préparent un asile au premier des humains,
Le voyez-vous tracer des routes régulières,
Contraindre dans leur cours des ondes prisonnières?
Le voyez-vous parer d'etrangers ornemens
L'enfance de la terre et son premier printems?
Sans contrainte, sans art, de ces douces prémices
La nature épuisa les plus pures délices.

Chant i.

O, in your gardens love wild Nature's plan;
For God himself the model gave to man!
When Milton's hands the bless'd asylum wove,
Where our first parents wander'd rich in love;
Did he with frigid rules each path restrain?
Did he in fetters vile the waves enchain?

'Did he a load of foreign splendours fling
O'er earth's soft infancy, and earliest spring?
No! artless, unconfined, there Nature bland
With loveliest fanciès deck'd the laughing land.

He then hastens to transplant some of the most beautiful features of Milton's Eden, and concludes the episode with a picture worthy of the divine poet whom he is indirectly eulogising, and tinted, indeed, with the very colours of that matchless artist:—

C'est là que les yeux pleins de tendres rêveries,
Eve à son jeune époux abandonna sa main,
Et rougit comme l'aube, aux portes du matin.
Tout les félicitoit dans toute la nature,
Le ciel par son éclat, l'onde par son murmure.
La terre, en tressaillant, ressentit leurs plaisirs;
Zéphir aux antres verds redisoit leurs soupirs;
Les arbres frémissoient, et la rose inclinée
Versoit tous ses perfums sur le lit d'hyménée.
Chant i.

There blushing like the rising morn, while love
Beam'd from each eye, Eve sought the nuptial grove
And to her youthful lover's longing arms
Obsequious yielded all her virgin charms.

The genial hour exulting Nature hails,
Their sighs ecstatic swell the gentle gales,
Murmur the waves, fair smile the heav'ns above,
And joyful earth congratulates their love;
Whisper the groves, the rose inclines her head,
And flings fresh odours o'er the bridal bed.

In the editions subsequent to that from which the version whose merits we are considering was made, there occurs, immediately after the episode of Milton's Eden, a long description of Blenheim, occupying more than a hundred lines, and including several very beautiful passages; but of this digression, the only notice that can at present be taken, is, on my part, to lament that it had not been inserted in time to fall beneath the pen of the anonymous translator.

The specimens, indeed, which have already been given of the occasional merits of his version, must, I should imagine, unite the regrets of the reader of the original with my own, that he had it not in his power to exert his talents in the transfusion of these supplementary lines; regrets which will be heightened as we advance further in the work, not only from the recurrence of similarly situated passages in the re-

cently augmented editions of the French poem, but from the increasing beauty of those extracts, which it will be my pleasing province to select from the residue of this first and early attempt to introduce M. De Lille to an English public. Let us not forget, however, in this place, the consolation which has been held out in the preceding number, that the most essential, and highly-finished parts of this noblest work of the Gallic bard, are to be found as well in the earliest as the latest impressions.

(*To be continued.*)

No. VI.

Thou smiling queen of every tuneful breast,
Indulgent Fancy! from the fruitful banks
Of Avon, whence thy rosy fingers cull
Fresh flowers and dews to sprinkle on the turf
Where Shakspeare lies, be present.

AKENSIDE.

It was on the morning of the Vigil of St. John the Baptist, 1615, one of the loveliest which the season had afforded, when Shakspeare and his friends, including Montchensey and his daughter, the younger Combe, and Mrs. Hall, set off, after an early breakfast, on their excursion to Charlecote-House. As the distance from Stratford was not much more than three miles, and they had time for the performance of their pleasant task in the most leisurely manner, they preferred walking to any mode of conveyance.

Every thing conspired, indeed, to render the exercise they were about to undertake, even to such an invalid as Montchensey still was, and

while the heats of the day were yet unfelt, in a high degree delightful; for a gentle shower had fallen during the early part of the preceding night, and the breeze swept by with freshness, health, and fragrance on its wings. To Montchensey in particular, who had only within these few days ventured forth from confinement, it seemed, as it were, an opening paradise, and he was eloquent even to rapture on the gratifications he so keenly felt.

The occasion was, in fact, worthy of the rapture it inspired; for, whether the eye, the ear, or the faculty of smell, were considered, the appeal to the senses was alike perfect and exquisite. It was just that period when the clouds had ceased contending with the growing light; when the mists had risen like the vapours of an accepted offering, and the landscape was kindling into life and beauty. The dew-drops, those stars of the morning, glistened on every leaf; a livelier verdure mantled over the fields; a richer colouring glowed upon the flowers, and the Avon, winding and doubling through its fertile valley, now partially concealed by overhanging wood, and now sweeping unshaded through

pasturage of the most vivid green, was seen laughing and sparkling in the sun-beams.

The breath of heaven, meanwhile, was whispering through the trees; the sound of the cattle cropping the crisp herbage, fell distinctly on the ear, and the melody of the feathered world was heard in ever-varying strains of gratitude through every copse and grove; while perfumes of the most delicious odour, from the clover, the bean-flower, and the meadow-sweet of the plains, from the honeysuckle, sweet-briar, and musk-rose of the hedges, stole upon and enriched the air.

Invigorated by the balmy coolness of the breeze, and interested by the features of the vale, which, at frequent turns of the road, opened up new beauties, the green and lively tinting of the home landscape being contrasted with the soft blue haze of distant hills, the party wandered on, heedless of time, and either commenting on the scenes before them, or absorbed by the reminiscences they were calculated to suggest.

They at length reached the park gates, and here Montchensey, on whose mind every thing

connected with Shakspeare had made an indelible impression, recollected, what tradition had been careful to preserve, that it was to these gates the young bard had affixed the pasquinade which had so materially contributed to hasten his flight from Stratford, and turning to him with a smile, he enquired if the lines yet dwelt on his memory, and whether they might venture to request a repetition of them.

"Mere doggrel, Master Montchensey," answered the bard, "and therefore not worth repeating. I wish, indeed, they were buried in oblivion; for though I still think Sir Thomas exhibited more warmth and animosity than the occasion called for, and I well remember being pleased with the opportunity of bringing him on the stage, under the character of Justice Shallow, yet the verses in question, the offspring of youthful petulance and unbridled resentment, were coarse and exasperating in a high degree. The worthy knight, I have reason to believe, never entirely forgave their severity; but I must add, in justice to the present possessor of Charlecote, that, if he has not forgotten the transaction, he reviews it without a feeling of hostility;

for since my return to Stratford, I have experienced from him nothing but kindness and hospitality."

"I am happy to hear so decided a proof of his good sense," replied Montchensey, as they entered the park, the interesting appearance of which soon absorbed all their attention. It was, indeed, independent of its association with the fame and fortunes of the bard, a scene of great beauty; but to the present party, who viewed Shakspeare with much of that enthusiasm which has only fallen to the public mind within the last century, it was in a very high degree attractive.

"And it was here, my dear Sir," said Helen, addressing the poet, "among the sheltered glens and romantic solitudes of Fulbroke park, beneath these deep and lofty woods,

> whose boughs are moss'd with age,
> And high tops bald with dry antiquity,

that you were tempted to commit that trespass which, so fortunate for the lovers of the drama, cast the colour of your future life."

As she uttered these words, the breeze sighed

with a soothing and delicious murmur through the branches of the ancient avenue of oaks beneath which they stood, while, at the same moment, a few vagrant deer were seen bounding across the extremity of the vista.

"Yes, my sweet Helen," cried the poet, emerging with his friends from the broad shadow of the trees upon an open and extensive lawn, "to yonder spot, called Daisy-hill, then, and now, the keeper's lodge," pointing to a small house distantly situated in the park, "was it my fate to be carried, on detection in this adventurous amusement. My fellows in the sport had fled with a precipitation which I disdained to imitate; and here, in a state of jeopardy not much to be envied, had I to wait for some time, until a message from the hall summoned the poor culprit to a severer trial. But before we visit this scene, still present to my memory in all its once humiliating features, you would doubtless wish to see somewhat more of these rich glades and woodlands, which long before I had the misfortune to be entangled with my deer-loving friends, had formed my favourite haunts, and were to me, indeed, in all my youthful cares,

and lonely meditations, a source of never-failing delight."

"May I not infer then, my friend," cried Montchensey, as with a perseverance which bade defiance to all common obstacles, the party had now reached the interior depths, and almost pathless solitudes of Fulbroke park; "that we are indebted to your wanderings here for the many exquisite sketches of forest scenery which delight us so much in your play of *As You Like It*, and which form so fine an accompaniment for the character of the melancholy Jaques?"

"See," exclaimed Helen, her expressive eyes beaming with delight, as she pointed to a huge oak, whose twisted roots hung fantastically over a rivulet hurrying with loud murmurs to the Avon, while the rays of the sun just tinted, as they passed, one side of its moss-grown trunk, "does not yonder woodland picture most emphatically justify your supposition? for was it not here that the kind-hearted though sarcastic Jaques lay moralising on the wounded deer!

'To day, my lord of Amiens and myself,
Did steal behind him, as he lay along
Under an oak, whose antique root peeps on
Upon the brook that brawls along this wood.'"

Shakspeare smiled, and turning to his daughter, "You see, Susanna, that your partiality for your father's productions, however great, is in danger of being completely rivalled." "Yes, my dear Sir," she replied, the tears of rapture starting as she spoke, "I love Helen Montchensey, and revere her parent for the taste and enthusiasm which they feel for your writings. I can well remember, for the day is indelibly fixed on my memory, when first I accompanied you hither, how vividly was brought to my recollection the enchanting solitudes of the forest of Arden, and I can well remember, too, that as we sate, not far from this sequestered spot, and on the banks of this very stream, and whilst our minds were rapt in contemplation of the wild and lone grandeur of these gigantic trees, you confirmed my ideas of similitude by allowing that the first draughts of the woodland scenery of 'As You Like It,' were founded on the reminiscences of early life, when it was your most delightful recreation to wander through the glades of Fulbroke park."

"It is even so, my love," returned the bard, "nor has the lapse of years in aught diminished my attachment to these almost pathless solitudes.

I can still lose myself beneath their twilight gloom, in the same luxury of reverie, and my imagination still bodies forth those fairy visions which were wont to haunt my footsteps here in early life. Let us now, however, disentangling ourselves from the intricacies of the forest, reseek the Avon, for we have yet to traverse a considerable part of the adjoining grounds of Charlecote, and Sir Thomas, whom I yesterday apprised of our intended visit, may possibly be awaiting our approach."

The party immediately, therefore, though reluctantly, quitted the romantic recesses of Fulbroke, and crossing the Avon, on whose banks were reposing several herds of deer, and which winds through the grounds at the rear of Charlecote-house, they entered the home enclosures, with the view of approaching the mansion by the grand front, and through the noble avenue of trees which led up to it. Montchensey seemed greatly pleased with the appearance of the house as it rose before them through the stately trees in all its Gothic grandeur; it was on a large scale, in the form of the letter E, built of brick with stone coigns, and

octagon turrets at each corner, and had been erected in the first year of the preceding reign. A massy gateway, resembling a barbican, and flanked by towers, admitted them into a spacious court, from which the front of the building with its stone-shafted windows, and lofty portal surmounted by armorial bearings carved in stone, were seen to great advantage.

They were ushered into the Great Hall, which was lighted by an immense bay or bow window, that looked, between gigantic shafts of ponderous stone-work, into the court; and here they were met by Sir Thomas Lucy, who welcomed them with great cordiality, and shaking the bard most heartily by the hand, "I am right glad, Master Shakspeare," he said, "when any thing induces you to visit the old manor-house:" then turning to Montchensey, who seemed attentively surveying the objects around him, "I have endeavoured, Sir," he remarked, "to preserve this hall as nearly as possible in the state in which it was left by my father; and our good friend here, whose early intimacy with this portion of the building, however involuntary on his part, has thrown around it a great addi-

tional interest, will tell you I think, for his first impressions beneath this roof," he added with a smile, "were not, I have reason to believe, of an evanescent kind, that my efforts have not been unattended with success."

"Body of me, Sir Thomas," cried the bard, "so entirely are the features of this place what they were in my youthful days, that I could almost fancy myself once more the culprit, when, surrounded by your father's game-keepers, I stood abashed at the wrathful indignation which lowered in his worship's countenance."

"Say you so?" exclaimed Montchensey, looking around with increasing interest and curiosity, whilst at the same time Mr. Combe was relating to Helen some anecdotes which tradition had connected with Charlecote and the poet's misfortune. This hall had been, in fact, the place to which Shakspeare, after some hours confinement during the night in the keeper's lodge, had been carried early the ensuing morning, and it was, indeed, in every point of view a very fine specimen of what constituted this important part of a large manor-house in the days of Elizabeth and her successor. It was vaulted,

and of considerable height, and hung round with the trophies and paraphernalia of hunting, hawking, and archery. At one end was a large gallery, and immediately opposite the bow-window, filled with the armorial bearings of the family, was the fire-place, or hearth, for wood fuel, of a width and depth that seemed to speak of the revelry and good cheer to which this noble apartment was destined during the winter months. A table of great length and massive construction, one extremity of which was so contrived as to answer occasionally the purposes of a shuffle-board, occupied the centre, whilst at its head stood a curiously carved arm-chair, of dark oak, with a high back and triangular seat, to which Shakspeare directed the attention of Helen, telling her, at the same time, that it was in that very chair his worship sate when he had the ill luck to be brought before him; a declaration which had scarcely escaped his lips, when Montchensey, glancing an arch look at Sir Thomas, pounced into its ample seat, and, turning an eye of assumed gravity and anger on the bard, exclaimed in a tone correspondent with the occasion, "You varlet! you have beaten

my men, killed my deer, and broken open my lodge!" "But not kissed your keeper's daughter," retorted the bard smiling. "Tut, a pin! this shall be answered,"* rejoined Montchensey, rising from his state, whilst a burst of merriment and surprise rang through the hall, and a more than usual pleasure lightened in the eyes of Helen on witnessing this sally of returning vivacity on the part of her father. "Marry, my sweet mistress," cried the poet, patting Helen on the cheek, "I am right glad to see your father in such a merry vein. I think we shall send him back to Wyeburne Hall an altered man." A look of ineffable sweetness and gratitude formed the reply of Helen, whose attention was immediately afterwards directed by Mr. Combe to the emblazoning on the stained panes of the bow-window. "There," said he, "in those quarterings you see the three *white luces*, so humorously memorized in the 'Merry Wives of Windsor.'" "Yes," remarked Sir Thomas, who overheard the allusion, "those are my father's arms;" then, laughing with great glee, and clapping his friend Will somewhat lustily

* See The Merry Wives of Windsor, Act i. Sc. 1.

on the shoulder, he quaintly added, "'all his successors gone before him have done't, and all his ancestors that come after him may: they may give the dozen *white luces* in their coat.'* But come, my friends," he continued, "we will now, with your good leaves, quit this old hall, which, though I delight to inhabit with a blazing fire during the winter season, is now too much littered with hawk-perches, long-bows, and hunter's poles, to be altogether as convenient as I could wish; and, although as Master Silence has truly said or sung,—

'Tis merry in hall, when beards wag all,'

yet I think the dining-room will afford us, at present, a more suitable place for refreshment."

This proposal, however, after many acknowledgments of Sir Thomas's hospitality, was about to be declined by Shakspeare and his party, when the worthy knight broke in upon the excuses of the bard by declaring that he could admit of no refusal, and shaking him heartily by the hand, he added, in a tone of peculiar pleasantry and good humour, and with a

* Merry Wives of Windsor, Act. i. Sc. 1.

most significant cast of countenance, "By cock and pye, Sir, you shall not away so soon — I will not excuse you; you shall not be excused; excuses shall not be admitted; there is no excuse shall serve; you shall not be excused." Then, ringing the bell, he called out as the servant entered, "Some pigeons, Davy; a couple of short-legged hens; a joint of mutton; and any pretty little tiny kickshaws, tell William Cook."*

"But really, my good friends," continued Sir Thomas, as his servant, in no small perplexity and amazement, left the hall, "setting all joke apart, I cannot think of your leaving Charlecote without your seeing Lady Lucy, whom I expect in every moment from the park, and who is anxious, I know, to welcome Mrs Hall and her young friend."

There was no resisting this appeal, and, accordingly, Shakspeare and his party were ushered to the banquetting room, the former intimating to Sir Thomas as they passed, in reply to a hearty invitation to dinner, that he was under the necessity of returning to Strat-

* King Henry IV. Part 2. Act V. Sc. 1.

ford to receive two or three gentlemen whom he had engaged to meet the Montchenseys.

On entering the room, they were not greeted, it is true, with precisely the same articles which the knight had so facetiously ordered, but a light and elegant cold repast was on the table; and on being joined by the lady of the house, who in a few minutes came in from her walk with two of her children, they slightly partook, more out of compliment than from appetite, of what was placed before them.

Lady Lucy was a lovely and pleasing woman, and received her visitors, and more especially Shakspeare, for whom she entertained a very sincere admiration, in the most cordial and gracious manner. "I am most delighted to see you, my dear bard," she said, "on this, perhaps the most poetical morning of the year, for we are approaching, as you well know, the mysterious Eve of Midsummer, and if ever mortal had a claim upon the affections of the Queen of Faery, time out of mind the tutelary guardian of this artful night, you must be the man. You shall positively," she added, laughing, "become a candidate, maugre all the opposition

of contending sorcerers and spirits, for that great achievement of St. John's Eve, the discovery of the wonder-working *fern-seed:** though I doubt, even if success were to attend your efforts, whether Titania could confer upon you through such, or any medium, greater potency or more magic influence over the human heart than what you have already been gifted with."

"Indeed, my gracious lady," cried the bard, "this beautiful morning must have inspired you with an overflowing vein of fancy ere you could thus so partially estimate my powers; but

* "It was the belief of our credulous ancestors, that the *fern-seed* became visible only on St. John's Eve, and at the precise moment of the birth of the Saint; that it was under the peculiar protection of the Queen of Faery, and that in this awful night, the most tremendous conflicts took place, for its possession, between sorcerers and spirits; for

The wond'rous one-night seeding ferne,

as Browne calls it, was conceived not only to confer *invisibility at pleasure* on those who succeeded in procuring it, but it was also esteemed of sovereign potency in the fabrication of charms and incantations. Those, therefore, who were addicted to the arts of magic, and possessed sufficient courage for the enterprise, were believed to watch in solitude during this solemn period, in order that they might seize the seed on the instant of its appearance."—*Shakspeare and his Times,* vol. i. p. 329.

beware how you intoxicate a poet with praise, especially at this season of the year, when the influence of Phœbus, you know, is proverbially liable to heighten imagination into what has been called a Midsummer madness."

"I have no fear of its effects in relation to yourself, my kind friend," she replied, "for the fit has been upon you, and we know the result; and much, indeed, do I wish that you would take it into your head to *Dream* again. But, to say the truth, you are chiefly indebted for my allusion to the superstitions of this day, to a circumstance which has just now occurred during my walk in the park, where I observed several young women dressed with more than usual care and neatness, busily engaged in searching amongst the plantations, and, on enquiring what object they had in view, I was told they were seeking for a plantain tree, under the root of which they expected to find a small coal, which if dug up this day precisely at noon, and placed under their pillows at night, would infallibly enable them to dream of their future partners for life; a spell or charm of which I scarcely remember to have heard, numerous

as are the credulities connected with the approaching Eve of St. John." *

"It is an awful time, my lady," said the poet half in jest, "and one peculiarly interesting to the simple love-lorn maiden, more especially when engaged in the fearful occupation of watching by the midnight taper, or sowing hemp seed in the church-yard; and though I can perceive my fair young friend here," slyly looking at Helen as he spoke, "is smiling as it were in conscious superiority to the influence of these wild traditions, yet the time may come when even by her, incredulous as she now appears, the Vigil of St. John shall be recollected with tender though with tremulous hope, and hailed in all its shows of promise."

"Indeed, my dear Sir," said Helen blushing, whilst a sigh involuntarily stole from her bosom, "I am not quite so spell-proof, even at present, as you imagine; and though I shall probably, in spite of your sly prediction, neither watch nor sow, yet I have always felt strongly im-

* For an account of this superstition, see Aubrey's Miscellanies, p. 103, and Drake's Shakspeare and his Times, vol. i. p. 233.

pressed with at least one of the visionary terrors of the coming eve; the belief, now so prevalent, that he who shall fast on Midsummer Eve, sitting in the church-porch, will at midnight see the spirits of those who are to die in the parish during that year, approach and knock at the church door, precisely in the order of time in which they are doomed to depart."*

"It is certainly one of those superstitions," remarked Shakspeare, "which, from the object held in view, is well fitted to call forth the most solemn and appalling interest; but it is one also, amongst many others, justly chargeable with a too daring and unhallowed species of curiosity; and, on this account, perhaps, it has been related, as a mode of deterring from the attempt, that, some years ago, one of a company of young men who were said to be watching on this night in the beautiful porch of Stratford church, having fallen into a profound sleep, his ghost or spirit, whilst he lay in this state, was seen by the rest of his companions, knocking at the church-door: a visitation, in all human pro-

* Vide Shakspeare and his Times, vol. i. p. 330.

bability, the result of their own fears, but which they had the folly to communicate to their associate, as soon as he awoke; and the effect on his mind was such as to lead to despondency and madness, and, ere the year had closed, to the verification of the omen by his death."

Here the stroke of a clock in one of the turrets gave notice that the morning was wearing away, and Shakspeare and his friends, though highly gratified by their visit, were under the necessity of hastily taking leave of Sir Thomas and Lady Lucy, time having passed away so rapidly as scarcely to allow them the opportunity of reaching New-Place by the hour of noon.

On re-entering Stratford, they observed its inhabitants busily preparing for the celebration of the Vigil of the Saint, every man's door being shadowed with green birch, long fennel, Saint John's wort, orpin, and the like, interspersed with garlands of flowers, and with lamps ready trimmed for the illumination, which was to commence after sun-setting, and last through the night.

Shakspeare, on his return, not only found the neighbours whom he had invited to his table, already met, and including Mr. Thomas Russel, Mr. Somerville of Edstone, Mr. Anthony Nash, Mr. Hamnet Sadler, and Dr. Hall, but one, also, whom he had been long wishing, though little expecting, to see, his poetical son, Ben Jonson, who, being on his way to visit a relation near Wenlock Abbey, in Shropshire, had deviated some miles from his road, in order to pay his respects to his earliest dramatic friend, Will Shakspeare.

The meeting between these two *now* celebrated men, was, in the highest degree frank and cordial. They had not seen each other for more than two years, and though for some time previous to the retirement of Shakspeare from the stage, the public had considered them as rival candidates for fame, yet this fancied antagonism had not for a moment interrupted their friendship, or vitiated their due estimation of each others talents. On the contrary, Jonson loved Shakspeare with an ardour almost filial, and never ceased to consider him as the

most original and creative genius which poetry had hitherto seen,

The applause, delight, and wonder of the stage,

as he afterwards termed him; whilst the latter returned the affection of honest Ben, with warmth, and with a sincere and just admiration for his learning, judgment, and inexhaustible vein of humour.

"Give me thy hand, my dear Ben," exclaimed the bard of Avon; "right glad am I to see thee! Marry, this chance makes amends for all disappointments!—I had begun to think my old friends in the city had forgotten me."

"Why, Master Shakspeare," replied Jonson, returning the salutation in his usual blunt manner, and with the utmost glee, whilst at the same time, however, the dewy lustre in his eye told the feelings of his heart, "if you will linger here picking of daisies, and babbling of green fields, instead of rejoining your former fellows and goodwishers round a bowl of sack at the Mermaid, God's my life! it cannot chance but you will sometimes slip even from the recollection of your warmest admirers; though I must

say for myself, and that truly too, that go where thou wilt, mine excellent friend, the memory of Will Shakspeare, his mind, and manners, will never away from my heart."

"I believe it, Ben, I most sincerely believe it," rejoined Shakspeare, "nor would I wish a better or more learned advocate with posterity, when I am gone, than what thou mayest prove."

"Master Shakspeare," replied Jonson with great animation, take my word for it, you will want none. 'Sdeath! I question if my own productions, built as they are on the adamantine basis of antiquity, and founded, I may venture to say, on the very rock of dramatic philosophy, will have a longer date. But prythee, my kind Will, a cup of your best Canary, for, i'faith, the heat of the morning, and the dustiness of the roads, have well nigh rendered my throat as dry as a potsherd."

Shakspeare smiling at the characteristic burst of self-applause which his learned friend had thus ingeniously contrived to include in his complimentary address, immediately ordered a flagon of his best wine, and turning to him, "I must make you acquainted," he said, "with my

worthy guests here, the Montchenseys of Derbyshire, lovers of the drama, aye and judges too, I can assure you."

It was, indeed, a singular and most unexpected gratification, both to Montchensey and his daughter, thus to behold, beneath the same roof, the two greatest dramatic poets of their country; for Jonson had, by this time, attained the zenith of his reputation, having already produced those four exquisite comedies whose humour, in spite of all local and temporary allusion, must claim an ever-during celebrity. And though in the attributes of the higher order of poetry, they very justly considered Ben as immeasurably beneath his great contemporary, yet such was the strength and discrimination of his characters in the department in which he excelled, so much had the public been in the habit of comparing them together, and so many were the anecdotes in circulation respecting both their friendship and their rivalry, that it was scarcely possible to have encountered the society of any individuals which, in a literary point of view, was better calculated to excite intense interest,

than that now offered by the accidental meeting of the poets of Macbeth and Volpone.

The contrast, indeed, which existed between the two bards, as well in person and manners, as in genius and talent, gave a raciness and power of impression to their converse and appearance which could not fail to strike even the most careless observer. For whilst, in his figure, Jonson was large and athletic, in his features stern and sarcastic, in his temper egotistic, confident, and overbearing, the reverse of the picture, both as to countenance and disposition, was, as we well know, the allotment of his more amiable companion. In sincerity and singleness of heart, however, in wit and humour, and knowledge of mankind, they were nearly on a level; and as Jonson could not but feel, and would sometimes freely acknowledge, the vast superiority of Shakspeare in fertility of imagination, and in his powers of exciting terror and pity, so would Shakspeare, at all times, duly reverence and appeal to the learning, judgment, and correct classical taste of Jonson; feelings and acknowledgements which, though sometimes transiently perturbed by spleen on one side, and

light raillery on the other, ever maintained between these remarkable men an intercourse of kindness and esteem.

It may readily be conceived, therefore, that when the company at New-Place sate down to dinner, which they did almost instantly after Ben had quaffed off his glass of Canary, and had received the salutations of the newly arrived party, few, if any, would be willing to break in upon those enquiries and recollections which very soon began to occupy the feelings, and, in a great measure, the conversation of the long-separated poets. The business and routine of the table, however, and the necessary attention on the part of Shakspeare to his guests, admitted, for a time, of little, save general remark; nor was Ben unmindful of his new associates: he paid the most marked attention to the ladies of his friend's family, and was particularly struck with their visitors from Derbyshire. He was, in fact, not only a skilful physiognomist, but an excellent judge also of female beauty, and he found employment for both tastes in contemplating the appearance of Montchensey and his Helen; the deep traits of sorrow and of suffer-

ing in the energetic countenance of the father, and the lovely, and almost seraph-like expression in the features of the daughter.

As soon, however, as the ceremonies of the table were over, and the party had retired to the banqueting-bower in the garden, than Shakspeare, filling to the brim a goblet of Ben's favourite liquor, and turning on him a look of the utmost complacency and kindness, "Health and long life to thee, my noble friend," he exclaimed, "and thrice welcome to the banks of Avon! We shall teach you, ere you leave us, I would fain hope, to love the rural deities."

"I thank you, Master Shakspeare, I heartily thank you," replied Ben, strongly affected, "and I would it were in my power to tarry with you for a while; for you have gotten here a goodly dwelling and a rich; friendship, love and beauty are around you I can well perceive, and that cheerfulness to boot, which glows and kindles in a cup of old Canary, in the which, my most excellent friend, I now crave leave to drink to your happiness, and that of your family and friends."

"By my troth, Ben, we'll not part in haste,"

cried Shakspeare; "for so long is it since we have met, and so many enquiries have I to make of thee after our old friends and cronies in the city, that we cannot suffer you to peep in upon us and begone."

"I cry you mercy, Master Shakspeare," rejoined Ben, "but I must away i'the morning. In good truth, I have stretched a point already to reach you; for had it not been that I myself was right anxious to see you, and stood pledged, moreover, to our friends at the Mermaid to report to them touching your health and conditions, I must, perforce, for a season at least, have foregone what I now enjoy."

"Marry, then, we'll make a night on't! and the eve of St. John shall, for thy sake, my dear Ben, ever sound sweeter in mine ears in all time to come. But tell me, how fare our noble brethren at the Mermaid?"

"Fore heaven! Master Shakspeare, if we have had a jovial night, or a mirth-moving fit, since you left us, I'm a sous'd gurnet! An you do not come amongst us again, our *symposia* will languish into very dullness, and our wit become as thick as Tewksbury mustard. There's Beau-

mont and Fletcher, and Selden, and Cotton, and Carew, choice spirits once, and full of matter, and who were wont to put their whole souls into a jest, sit now all *a-mort*, and lack a prompter; and as for the theatres, were it not that I now and then present them with a piece of the right quality, full of pith and just conceit, the glass, as it were, and mirror of the times, the profession of an actor would be stark naught, as far at least as novel wares could find it occupation."

"May'st thou long live, my worthy friend," exclaimed Shakspeare, "to furnish food and recreation for the learned and judicious; for those who know a good play when they hear it, and have the conscience to praise what they understand! And sure I am, that whilst the author of the *Alchemist* survives, neither drama nor actors stand in jeopardy. But speaking of actors, hast thou heard or seen aught, of late, of my kind fellows, Burbage, Hemynge, and Condell? Thrive they, and doff the world aside, as managers and players, or do they talk, after my example, of turning truant to the stage?"

"Odslife! my gentle host," rejoined Ben, pouring out a sparkling bumper of Canary in

answer to a challenge from Montchensey, "my memory had well nigh played me a treacherous trick. The rogues, as I live, for I told them that I hoped to get a glance of thee as I journeyed into Shropshire, prayed me to tender their best affections, and to say, they were afeard you had forgotten both them and their vocation: and i'faith, my dear Will, I begin to entertain a modicum of their suspicions. But, surely, thou hast not altogether discarded our classic Thames for the banks of the Avon, nor resigned the sock and buskin to dally solely with the nymphs again of thy native stream! 'Slight! I shall expect to hear of thee once more conning *doloroso* sonnets on love and friendship, and green leaves! and now I think on't, that same noble lord to whom thou hast dedicated so many of these *crambo* compositions, for thou knowest, Will, I do not love sonnets lamented to me the other day, and the tears stood in his eyes as he spoke, that thou shouldst have so completely forsaken thy old haunts at the Globe; adding, in the which I most heartily bore a part, that the stage, with but one or two exceptions,

which shall be nameless, hath been drooping in despair ever since thy departure!"

"Master Jonson," interposed Montchensey, and rising at the same time with an expression of deep enthusiasm, "give me your hand! An I do not place you in my heart, aye in my heart of hearts, for what you have now so kindly said and urged, never trust me more! Yes, Master Jonson, much as I laud you for your truly classic and most judicious works, for your right pithy, humorous, and ever-to-be-admired comedies, I praise you still more for the warmth of friendship, and deep feeling of esteem which, I now plainly see, notwithstanding some peculiarity in your manner, you inwardly cherish for our ever honoured host; a friendship, the memory of which, in spite of all that malevolence, now or hereafter, may bring forward to the contrary, shall endure to distant times! I drink peace and God's blessing to you, Master Jonson, with my hearty prayers for your success, as well in what you are now trying to effect, by urging our beloved Shakspeare to a re-union with his Muse, as in your own more immediate labours for the stage."

"Master Montchensey," replied Ben, greatly struck with the energetic tone of his address, and flattered at the same time by the frank and honest warmth with which he had expressed his good opinion, "you are a man after my own heart, and whilst I quaff this flask of Canary to our better acquaintance, I make bold to tell you, after my cordial thanks for your kind wishes on my behalf, that in all which relates to my inestimable friend here, and I say it before his face, you do me but justice against the carpings of a slanderous world; aye, and the knaves shall know it too, ere long. In the mean time, Master Montchensey, I am right glad to find I may reckon upon you as my ally in this affair, and could we but secure your blooming daughter here, as our advocate, I doubt not but we should carry the day."

"Indeed, my dear Sir," said Helen Montchensey, blushing, and bestowing on the half-enamoured bard one of her most bewitching regards, "greatly as we are indebted to you for your own valuable productions, and more particularly for the lyric parts of your delightful masques, which for elegance and sprightliness

both of thought and measure, are amongst my especial favourites, you will powerfully add to our obligations if you can but succeed in persuading our kind host to resume his dramatic career; for, after such a *last* piece, as he has been pleased to give us, though erringly, I trust, as to the use of the term, in his exquisite *Twelfth Night*, it is impossible for the public not to wish, and, indeed, considering all things, not to claim, that the farewell epithet should prove a perfect misnomer."

"Body o'me, Master Shakspeare," cried Jonson, somewhat exhilarated by the mellow raciness of the wine, and the touching smiles of youth and beauty, "an this do not restore you once more to the arms of Thalia and Melpomene, I know not what will." Then turning to Helen, with as much gallantry as the constitutional roughness of his manners would admit, "My kind affections to you, Mistress Helen," he continued, holding up a goblet of choice Canary, "praise from the lips of beauty hath ever been held most dear by the genuine bard; and whilst I would fain hope it may have its due weight with our admired contemporary here, let me on

mine own part declare, I feel its influence at my heart, and that, passing the cup to your acceptance, as I now crave leave to do, pardon me if I add in the words of one whom I have lately taught to speak our native tongue, what best accords with my feelings at the present moment." Then, rising up, and placing the cup in the hands of the somewhat astonished Helen, he burst forth in a tone of rapturous delight,

" Drink to me only with thine eyes,
And I will pledge with mine,
Or leave a kiss but in the cup,
And I'll not look for wine :

" The thirst, that from the soul doth rise,
Doth ask a drink divine,
But might I of Jove's nectar sip,
I would not change for thine."

" Why how now, Ben," exclaimed Shakspeare, smiling and enjoying the scene, " thou art still, I see, the same mad rogue as ever; a flagon of sack, and a brace of bright eyes, and the world may spin round as it lists! Faith, an thou wert but some fifteen or twenty years younger, it might behove Master Montchensey

now to look well to his charge. But I tell thee what, Ben, if ever I do pen another comedy, and I know not what friendship and flattery, when backed by the rhetoric of my lovely young guest here, may not achieve, thou shalt certainly have a nich in the *Dramatis Personæ*; for, look where I will, I shall not readily, either in a moral or dramatic point of view, find a better sample of rich and humorous, though rough integrity, than thou art like to prove."

"Thou art heartily welcome, Will, to make the most thou canst of me," replied the poet jocosely; "but, gramercy! what have we gotten here?" he continued, pointing to the heavens, which appeared suddenly illumined, as if by the reflection of a ruddy blaze.

"You seem to have forgotten, my good friend," returned Shakspeare, "that we are now on the verge of Midsummer Eve, the vigil of the Baptist, and some of my young townsmen are, I warrant me, anticipating by a bon-fire, the more general rejoicings for the night. Bye and bye, with your permission, and that of Master Montchensey and my neighbours here, we will, as is the custom of the times, grace their

revelry by our presence. In the mean while I entreat you will do honour to my sack."

" An I do not, my kind host, never trust me with a flagon more," cried the convivial bard, as, with the utmost cordiality and glee, he again raised the generous liquor to his lips; and here the conversation assumed a more general cast, the ladies joining in its interest and flow, until, tempted by the beauty of the afternoon, they left the bower to enjoy the more tranquil pleasures of the garden, a recreation which they willingly protracted until supper, which, at that time, was usually served up about six o'clock in the evening, was announced as awaiting them within.

It was not long after this meal which, owing to the early hour of dinner, was then a much more durable and serious refection than what in modern times passes under the same title, before the increasing sounds of mirth and rejoicing were very audible in Chapel-street; and, as the sun approached its setting, bon-fires became more numerous throughout the town. Shakspeare had taken care, in compliance with the good old custom, to order tables to be set

out before the front of his house, well furnished with march-pane, wassail bread, and stout ale; and no sooner had the ruddy orb sunk below the horizon, than, as the evening was peculiarly mild and serene, he invited his friends to accompany him into the porch, observing that this was a rite which, by promoting the offices of charity and kind neighbourhood, had a useful and truly moral tendency.

Few spectacles, indeed, could furnish to a benevolent mind a more interesting subject; for it exhibited the wealthier ranks almost universally contributing with courtesy and familiarity to the harmless gratification and amusement of their less opulent neighbours. Before each substantial householder's door, in fact, were to be seen tables loaded with good things, and the master of the banquet inviting as well strangers as acquaintance, to sit down and partake, with cheerfulness and moderation, of the benefits which God had been pleased to send them. It was the night in the year, in short, which, from time immemorial, had been dedicated to the Christian-like purpose of forgetting and forgiving; when every man esteemed it his

duty to forward and to foster reconciliation, and to labour in the conversion of enmity into love; and hence the fires which were this night every where kindled in the streets, were termed in allusion to the good and gracious purposes they were intended to commemorate, *bone*, or *bon*-fires.

That flames thus deemed to be emblematic of peace and good-will, should be hailed not only with joyful, but with superstitious rites, was a result naturally to be expected, and, accordingly, it formed not the least interesting part of the amusements of the evening, to behold a number of young men and maidens crowned with garlands of St. John's wort and vervain, and with violets and lilies in their hands, dancing round each fire in mystic movements, and, whilst casting their flowers into its bosom, deprecating the evils, and imploring the blessings of the passing year.*

* I have adhered strictly to the accounts which have been left us of the observance of *Midsummer Eve* by Stowe, and Bourne, and Borlase.— Vide Stowe in particular, " Survey of London," p. 159. edition of 1618.

There was, indeed, in the whole aspect, and getting up of the scene, something truly elegant and fanciful; for nearly every house had been decorated, as we have already mentioned, with shrubs and green branches, interspersed with lamps, which were now lighted up in profusion, converting the twilight, as it were, into an artificial day; and, whilst the elder part of the community sate beneath the silvered foliage on hospitable cares intent, and the younger, with features tinted by the glare of fire-light, were dancing with undiminished glee, music from unnumbered groups, as well itinerant as domestic, sometimes warbling close at hand, and sometimes heard remotely, amused and occupied the ear.

More particularly opposite New-Place, then, perhaps, the best house in Stratford, and, beyond every other distinction, the residence of its beloved bard, and which was now rendered more than usually conspicuous by the taste in which its front had been illumined, and above all, by the party assembled before its porch, had the charm and interest of the evening been concentrated. Here danced the most elegant

group of young people, and here, too, came the best musical performers which the festivity of the occasion had called forth; whilst Shakspeare, in order to encourage their exertions, had not only himself, to a certain degree, provided for their refreshment, but had given directions likewise to his opposite neighbour, Julius Shaw, the honest landlord of the Falcon, and who was then, indeed, the annual bailiff of the borough, and consequently entrusted with the care and safety of the town, to supply them with whatever might, in his opinion, be thought, within the bounds of moderation, additionally requisite.

It was in one of these pauses for reflection, and whilst all was comparatively still, that the sound of a harp of uncommon sweetness, and evidently touched with a master's hand, was heard approaching towards New-Place. The attention of Shakspeare and his party, and especially of the ladies, was soon almost exclusively engaged by the magic influence of these unwonted tones, which, as they drew nearer, soothed and fascinated the ear with strains of the most delicious melody. Nor was the appearance of the minstrel, as he somewhat slowly came for-

ward, scarcely less interesting than the music he had so happily called forth. He seemed, indeed, as he paused, and bowed with great deference to our bard and his little group of friends, to possess a figure of peculiar symmetry and manly beauty; but his features were partially, and, as it appeared, purposely shaded. In his dress it was easy to perceive that he had copied for the occasion a considerable part of the costume which half a century before had so remarkably distinguished the minstrel tribe; being clothed in a mantle of Kendal green, gathered at the neck by a gorget and clasp, from which depended a silver chain and medal, and girt round the waist with a belt of scarlet velvet. To these were added a turban of black cloth, with a laced fringe which hung half over his face, and surmounted by a plume of the same colour as the girdle, a ruff after the Elizabethan fashion, a doublet and hose of tawny camlet, worked at the wrists and seams with raised green silk, and buskins of dark brown leather fringed with scarlet.

The striking character of this garb, the grace and spirit, both of form and manner, which ac-

companied him who wore it, and the skill with which he struck his harp, had drawn after the youthful minstrel a concourse of all ranks and ages, who now stood opposite New-Place in eager and almost silent expectation of once more hearing the sounds which had so lately and so singularly delighted them.

It was not long before they were again gratified; but scarcely had he closed the prelude, and commenced, in a rich and mellow tone of voice, a little madrigal, whose words were those of wild and plaintive tenderness, than a considerable degree of agitation was perceptible in the features and manner of Helen Montchensey. She leant trembling, and with nearly her whole weight, on the arm of Mrs. Hall, and seemed to listen with an almost breathless intenseness of curiosity, mingled with alarm, to the song of the harper. It became evident, indeed, to Mrs. Hall, whose scrutiny had been powerfully awakened by the distress of her friend, that, notwithstanding the semi-veil which shaded the brow and eyes of the minstrel, both Helen and herself had been for some time the objects of his close and unwearied attention; and he had

even contrived during the execution of his interesting little ditty, gradually, and almost imperceptibly, to approach the spot where they stood, so that when Helen, whose eyes had been cast on the ground, as she anxiously listened to the recognition of tones which had never been heard by her without emotion, raised them as the voice seemed to vibrate on her ear, she beheld the minstrel at her side. It was at this moment, and whilst she involuntarily started at the close and hitherto unnoticed approximation of the seeming stranger, that carelessly, as it were, and as if by accident, and whilst his face was turned towards her own, he struck aside the veiling fringe, and instantly as her eye met his, the name of *Hubert* convulsively and unconsciously escaped her lips, and she sank powerless and fainting to the ground.

The confusion and alarm which this incident occasioned were such, that though the exclamation of Helen had reached the ears of her father, and had brought with it the most painful emotions, yet such were his apprehensions for the immediate safety of his daughter, that he suffered her, notwithstanding he entertained

the most violent prejudices against the agent, to be carried into New-Place in the arms of the minstrel, who had, indeed, half accomplished his purpose ere the astonishment of Montchensey would allow him time to reflect.

Fortunately, however, for all parties, Helen had sufficiently recovered her mental powers during the bustle and agitation of her conveyance, to be sensible not only of the delicacy of her own situation, but of the extreme peril which awaited the health of her father, if she suffered any farther interview to take place between him and the minstrel Hubert; and she, therefore, secretly implored the latter, whilst she yet lay in his arms, if he had any value for her happiness or peace of mind, or the well-being of her parent, to fly from New-Place, and even from Stratford, the moment after he had set her down beneath the roof of her friend.

In vain, therefore, after the hurry which accompanied this strange occurrence had subsided, did Shakspeare and Montchensey look around for him who had given origin to it. He had, in fact, now certain of the safety of his late lovely charge, and whilst all were still in some measure

engaged about the person of Helen, stolen unperceived out of the room, nor could any subsequent search or enquiry made during that evening, though prosecuted with great eagerness by many who had witnessed the transaction, ascertain whence he had come, or whither he had gone.

The effect, in the meantime, of this rencontre, both on the mind and personal appearance of Montchensey, was remarkable. The same wild and melancholy abstraction which so peculiarly distinguished his looks and manner, when first seen by Shakspeare, and which had been in a great degree dissipated by his enthusiastic attachment to the character and company of the poet, now recurred with, if possible, augmented power. Nor were the sorrows and distress of Helen, conscious of being at least indirectly accessary, to the sufferings of her father, less entitled, perhaps, to commiseration; for she had, of late, uniformly endeavoured, and with a solicitude prompted by filial affection of no ordinary intensity, to prevent the possibility of what had now happened.

To Shakspeare, who, beyond all the sons of

men, was intimately conversant with every shade of human feeling and emotion, the character of Montchensey had been already so far developed, as to excite within his breast no inconsiderable degree of interest; and the events of this evening, which seemed to throw additional mystery around both father and daughter, had still further stimulated his curiosity; more especially, when, in the features of the youthful minstrel, which, during the late tumult, had been for a few minutes fully exposed to his view, he beheld a striking resemblance to a dear, and distant, and, perhaps, deceased friend.

It was, therefore, with no unwilling ear that he now heard Montchensey, as soon as he had recovered sufficient composure for the purpose, repeat his request of an early visit from the poet at Wyeburne Hall; announcing, at the same time, his intention of leaving Stratford, partly perhaps in consequence of what had just occurred, early the ensuing morning. With this invitation indeed, seconded, as it was, by the earnest entreaties of the unhappy Helen, who, with tears in her eyes, petitioned for compliance, Shakspeare found it impossible not to acquiesce;

whilst the ladies, Dr. Hall, and Ben Jonson, who had all been included in the proposed visit, declined that honour for the present; the latter, however, declaring, with a hearty shake of the hand, and a bumper to their next meeting, that he would not fail to see how the cellars at Wyeburne Hall were stored in the course of the autumn, adding at the same time, that, as he was likewise on the wing, he would, with their leave, escort Master Montchensey and his daughter, on a part of their road the next morning.

With this arrangement, and with a promise on the part of Shakspeare, that the mission of honest Ben should not be altogether fruitless, but that he certainly would, if health were allowed him, rejoin his old friends at the Mermaid for a few days during the winter, the party separated for the night.

(*To be continued.*)

No. VII.

I range in fancy's consecrated round,
And meet the poet on a poet's ground,
Nor seek " mere rigid" truth of time and place,
But truth of manners, character, and grace.

MATHIAS.

NOT more than a fortnight had elapsed from the departure of Montchensey and his daughter from Stratford, when Shakspeare, having received another urgent invitation from his new friends, determined on carrying his promised visit into effect.

It was on the afternoon of the third day of his journey, at a time when he entertained hopes of reaching the place of his destination in the course of a very few hours, that, having crossed one of those long and dreary wastes so frequent in Derbyshire, he began to descend into a deep and narrow valley. So precipitous, indeed, was the declivity, that it was with difficulty either he or his servant, though they dismounted from

their horses, could keep the animals from falling. The scenery, however, which at every step began to unfold itself, was of a character well fitted to attract attention even from the most careless mind, much more from that of the mighty minstrel who now stood gazing on its confines. It appeared, in fact, as if the chasm opening at his feet, had been effected by some stupendous convulsion of nature, which had riven the rocks asunder to their very base, disclosing at the same time the waters of a torrent, which had rolled and raved along its course for unnumbered ages in darkness and concealment.

Nor while such was the impression which the first view of this singular glen, or rather abyss, conveyed to the mind, were its details, though sometimes blending romantic forms with those of stern and rude sublimity, ineffective in completing the picture; which was, indeed, in all its parts, worthy the pencil of Salvator Rosa, and, what is still higher and more efficient praise, of the genius of him who now contemplated it.

Formidable, in short, as were the jaws or portals of this valley, its savage yet majestic wildness seemed to start forth with additional

features, as our bard pursued its downward course. Here rose cliffs, from whose faces, abrupt and perpendicular, and tinted with every hue which mosses and lichens could supply, were projected huge masses of the purest limestone, so singularly formed by the sportive hand of nature, that being partially covered with a net-work of ivy, they had all the appearance of the towers, buttresses, and mouldings of some ruined but gigantic castle; and further on, and deeper in the dell, and towering several hundred feet in height, were seen rocks whose scathed and naked summits over-browed and darkened the rugged road which lay winding at their feet; whilst, midway from their fractured sides and yawning chinks, grew several aged oaks and mountain ashes, whose fantastic roots and writhed branches, streaming in the air, threw over the whole scene a grotesque yet gloomy grandeur.

Striking, however, as these features were, they became immeasurably enhanced in their effect, both by the peculiar sinuosity of the glen, and by the bold character of the stream which watered its bosom; the former powerfully exciting the imagination, as well by a glimpse of

recesses into which, from the devious direction of the valley, the eye could not penetrate, as by the perpetual shutting-in, and folding, as it were, into each other, of the various precipices, which from the like cause were every where presented to the view; whilst the latter, pouring along its rugged bed, either lashed into fury by obstructing rocks or narrowing straits, or foaming with continual murmur over shelves stretching across its channel, stamped on all around it a character of turbulent yet diversified sublimity.

It was whilst absorbed in the contemplation of this romantic scenery, and whilst visions not less varied and sublime than those which physical nature now offered to his view, were kindling in the mind of Shakspeare, that he was suddenly startled from his reverie by the explosion of a musket or carabine, which echoed, as it immediately was, from numerous faces of the rocks, seemed to fill the valley with dissonance and confusion. Scarcely, indeed, had he time to turn his attention to the spot whence the first report had seemed to issue, when a second and a third were heard in different directions, and presently there appeared to start

from the cliffs and rocks, as if by the creative call of some magician, the forms of armed men, who, after a moment's pause, and whilst shouting to each other in tones of exultation, were seen descending, or rather rushing on all sides towards the travellers, with a rapidity which set at nought the most fearful inequalities of ground.

Against such an attack it was instantly evident all resistance must be vain, and Shakspeare, therefore, whose presence of mind seldom if ever forsook him, prepared to receive the banditti with as much seeming composure and nonchalance as the suddenness and strangeness of the irruption could possibly allow him to collect. Unfortunately, however, his servant, not possessing any similar strength of mind, attempted to escape by flight, and it was not before the discharge of a carabine, whose contents passed close by his person, had brought him to his recollection, that he was again found at his master's side.

The foremost of the banditti had, in the meantime, nearly reached the spot where Shakspeare stood, calling out as they approached him, that

if he offered to move, they would instantly fire, a threat which he answered by composedly sitting down upon the fragment of a rock, at whose base the torrent unceasingly dashed, as it hurried onward with an arrow's speed to shoot from a ledge of limestone into a deep recess or caldron boiling in the depths below.

To the demand which immediately followed for their baggage, their money, and their horses, the astonished poet had scarcely framed a reply, when, at the sound of a bugle-horn, succeeded by a voice of authority and sway, the robbers, who had already begun to rifle their victims, fell back, and a young man, whose attitude and manner were those of command, and whose garb and figure were alike bold and imposing, rushed into the midst of them, denouncing, as he came forward, vengeance against him who had dared, without his orders, to fire upon the strangers. No sooner, however, had he fixed his eyes upon the bard, who was calmly expostulating with his plunderers, than he seemed for a moment rooted to the spot; then, suddenly recollecting himself, he called out to his followers in a tone of mingled astonishment and in-

dignation, "Know ye, my comrades, whom ye are thus insolently rifling? By Heaven!" he continued, as they stood gazing on him with surprise and disappointment in their countenances, "had any one of ye injured but a hair of yonder head," pointing to the person of the poet, "no power on earth should have redeemed him from the fury of my arm; he should have answered the violation by the instant forfeiture of his life! Nay, scowl not on me, ye dastards," he pursued, "but hearken whilst I tell you, that in him whom ye have but just now threatened with violence, you behold one to whose words ye have often listened with delight, to whose influence over the heart, hardened though ye be, ye have often paid the tribute of relenting nature! — our great and glorious Shakspeare!"

Never were the power and popularity of dramatic poetry more strikingly evinced than on this singular occasion; for, as if electrified by the name, these sons of rapine, men of desperate character and broken fortunes, though not devoid of education, shrunk momentarily back repentant and horror-struck; and then, in the next instant, and as if by one simultaneous movement,

they sprung forward to the feet of the poet, depositing there, with every proof of reverence and regret, the property they had already seized, whilst from those who had borne no part in the spoliation, but who had followed the footsteps of their leader, rose shouts of acclamation and applause.

It was, indeed, a moment of most profound and gratifying interest, and which was enjoyed in an almost equal degree by the freebooter and the bard; for whilst the latter felt a deep and hitherto unexperienced conviction of the extent and influence of his fame, the former no less exulted in the opportunity which had so unexpectedly been afforded him for the safety and protection of unrivalled talent. As soon, therefore, as the tumult had in some measure subsided, "My friends," exclaimed this predatory chief, turning to those who had been foremost in the assault, "ye have nobly redeemed, both in mine, and, I should think, your own opinion, the error which has been committed." Then vailing his bonnet, and advancing toward the bard, "If any thing," he said, addressing him with every mark of humility and admiration, "were want-

ing to show how deeply enthroned is the genius of Shakspeare in the hearts of his countrymen, the incident which has now occurred would of itself be sufficient. He will pardon then, I trust, in consideration of the homage thus singularly and unaffectedly paid to his power over human thought and feeling, the violence which has so lately endangered his person and property; and, he will permit me also to express, how highly I feel gratified in having been, through the mere recollection of his features, an humble instrument in bringing about the sudden revolution just witnessed in the dispositions and conduct of men, from their situation and habits not very prone to pay much deference to either moral or literary merit."

The result, indeed, was one which whilst it called forth the most pleasing and heart-felt emotions in the bosom of Shakspeare, could not but excite there, at the same time, from the novel and extraordinary circumstances with which it was connected, sensations of the deepest surprise; nor were the manners and appearance of the leader of these lawless men, or the style and tenor of his language, in the least

degree calculated to abate his astonishment. He was, in fact, in all respects fitted to impress upon the mind a vivid idea of what tradition had handed down of the wild but gallant and romantic character of the ancient English outlaw or banished man, and it appeared to Shakspeare as if he saw before him a faithful copy of his own Valentine or Orlando.

There was, moreover, something in the cast of his countenance, and in the contour of his figure, which seemed to strike the bard with the idea of having seen them before; but the former was so deeply bronzed by the efforts of art, and the latter in a garb so very dissimilar to the costumes of society, being a strange and fanciful admixture of what was at that time thought peculiar to the very contrasted characters of the forester and free-booter, that all chance of recognition was hopeless.

"My friend," replied Shakspeare, "for such, from the nature of your interference, I may truly term you, you are entitled to my best thanks, not only as the protector of my property and, perchance, of my life, but for the singularly liberal, and, to me, highly flattering expression

of feelings which has accompanied your good offices. Nor can I refuse," he continued, turning on the surrounding banditti a look of forgiving kindness and benignity, "my acknowledgments to men who, whatever I may think of the general character and tendency of their occupation, have done honour to themselves and human nature, by the prompt admission of an appeal which could only have its due weight in minds susceptible of just and generous emotion. Indeed I cannot choose but marvel, and you will excuse, I trust, the freedom of the observation, that you, my friend, who evidently possess the advantages both of taste and education, and your comrades too, who can, like yourself, thus enthusiastically show their esteem for dramatic talent, should adopt this very dangerous and predatory mode of life; it is one which, from the violence almost necessarily attending its career, would seem inconsistent with that love for the gentler arts to which I owe my present security. But, pardon me, situated as I now am, I can have no right to push the enquiry; let me hasten, therefore, to say, ere we part, for I must reach my destination, if possible, before

nightfall, that if in aught I can assist you, should you feel disposed to seek a reconcilement with the laws of your offended country, you may command my utmost services."

"In the name of myself and my companions," returned the youthful adventurer, scarcely repressing in his voice the agitation which struggled in his features, "I most heartily thank you; but our lot in this life is, I apprehend, finally determined, nor are we willing to become abject petitioners for the pardon of transgressions to which several of us have been driven by a stern and overwhelming necessity; — but you must allow me to escort you on your way, as far at least as shall be consistent with your safety; for some of my comrades are abroad, and though we are usually satisfied with the spoliation of deer-parks, and the adjacent forests of the peak, yet, should you chance to meet them, I cannot ensure you against a repetition of what you have already suffered in this secluded valley, through which, indeed, I suspect you have been led by unacquaintance with the track of the country, for this place has, of late,

been too notorious not to have the most circuitous route preferred to the risk of threading its terrific mazes."

This was a proposal too useful and acceptable to be rejected; and as soon, therefore, as Shakspeare had signified his assent and his sense of obligation for the offer, the marauders, at a signal from their leader, dispersed; not however without taking a cordial though a somewhat clamorously expressed leave of one who, at some period or other of their former lives, when the capital and not the country was their scene of action, had been the means of affording them many of their best remembered and most rational delights.*

* Of the great popularity of Shakspeare's plays amongst all classes of the people, and of the great superiority which they possessed in the public mind over the best productions of his contemporaries and immediate successors, nothing can afford us so decided a proof as the verses of Leon. Digges, prefixed to a spurious edition of Shakspeare's Poems in 1640. Speaking of the originality of the poet's dramas, he says, —

But O what praise more powerful can we give
The dead, than that, by him, the *king's-men* live,
His players; which should they ("*his dramas*") but have shar'd
his fate,
How could *the Globe* have prosper'd?

" And now, my admirable friend," said their chief, mounting a horse which he had ordered

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And then, addressing the Dramatists of the day, he tells them to apply to the *Bull*, the *Cockpit*, and the *Fortune* companies, and not to approach *Blackfriars* :—

I do not wonder when you offer at
Blackfriars, that you suffer: *'tis the fate*
Of richer veins; prime judgments, that have far'd
The worse, with this deceased man compar'd.
So have I seen when *Cæsar* would appear,
And on the stage at half-sword parley were
Brutus and *Cassius*, O how the audience
Were ravish'd! with what wonder they went thence!
When, some new day, they would not brook a line
Of tedious, though well-labour'd *Catiline*;
Sejanus too, was irksome; they priz'd more
" Honest" *Iago*, or the jealous *Moor*.
And though the *Fox* and subtil *Alchymist*,
Long intermitted, could not quite be mist,
Though these have shamed all the ancients, and might raise
Their author's merit with a crown of bays,
Yet these sometimes, even at a friend's desire,
Acted, have scarce defray'd the sea-coal fire,
And door-keepers: when, let but *Falstaff* come,
Hal, *Poins*, the rest,— you scarce shall have a room,
All is so pester'd: let but *Beatrice*
And *Benedick* be seen, lo! in a trice
The cock-pit, galleries, boxes, all are full.—
Brief, there is nothing in his wit-fraught book,
Whose sound we would not hear, on whose worth look;
Like old-coined gold, whose lines in every page,
Shall pass true current to succeeding age.

one of the retreating party instantly to send him, "whither are you bound? for unless you can finish your expedition in three or four hours, and the sun, you see, is sinking fast towards the horizon, you had better pass the night with us, though we can give you not a more sumptuous lodging than the shelter of a mountain cave."

"Were I not in my own estimation," returned the bard, "within a few miles of the end of my journey, I would cheerfully follow your advice; but, doubtless, you can tell me with perfect accuracy, from your intimate knowledge of the neighbourhood, how far it is to M———il Dale on the banks of the Wye, for thither I am going."

"Well, indeed," answered the youth, starting, and scarcely repressing a deep sigh, "am I acquainted with that lovely valley; and I conclude, of course, that the Hall, the ancient mansion of the Montchenseys, which is little more than an hour's brisk riding from the spot we stand upon, is the friendly roof to which you are hastening."

"It is even so," replied Shakspeare, "and I should imagine from your manner and mode

of speaking, that you have some knowledge of its inhabitants."

"To be at all familiar with this part of Derbyshire, and not to know the Montchenseys," said his guide, "is impossible." "And in what estimation," asked the poet, not a little surprised at the marked agitation of his companion, "are they held in the neighbourhood, for I confess myself to be little more in regard to them than the acquaintance of a day?"

"The family of Eustace Montchensey," returned the youth, "has been settled at Wyeburne Hall for many centuries, and whatever may be thought of its present lord, whose conduct is mysterious, and whose temper is somewhat gloomy and misanthropic, the ladies of his household, his amiable but unhappy wife, and his daughter, the beautiful Helen, are entitled to the highest esteem, and the former, indeed, to no small share of commiseration."

As he uttered these words, an expression of indefinable emotion, in which pity, awe, and anger, seemed to blend or chase each other with the rapidity of lightning, passed over his features; but he instantly afterwards pulled his

bonnet over his brow, so as to shade, in a great measure, the upper part of his countenance. In this manner they passed on for some time in silence and abstraction, Shakspeare musing on the strong interest which his fellow-traveller appeared to take in what concerned the Montchenseys, and recollecting also with no slight degree of astonishment, that from the lips of neither husband nor daughter, had a syllable escaped, during their residence at Stratford, which could lead to the supposition that such a being existed as the wife of the one, and the mother of the other.

At length, just as the sun was descending in all his glory, they reached the edge of a steep declivity, from which they beheld, cast as it were suddenly at their feet, one of the most delicious valleys that eye had ever seen or fancy ever dreamt of. It seemed, indeed, as if nature had intended it for a perfect contrast to the wild and savage scenery they had lately left, so peaceful and so lovely were its features, yet so diversified and picturesque was its every aspect. "This," said the freebooter to his companion, with an emotion he was unable to control,

"this is M———ll Dale; earth contains not a gem of greater beauty, a paradise of purer sweets, and yet to me it has been a source of ——." Here he paused, whilst Shakspeare, who had stood for some moments on the brow of the glen, absorbed in admiration and delight, now turned an enquiring eye on the countenance of his companion, and was surprised to find it marked with traits of anguish and remorse. "Yes," continued the youth, pointing to the westering orb, whose disk, encurtained by the richest tints of heaven, glowed the very image of calm beauty and repose, "I had hoped, like yonder sun, to have sank to rest with nature smiling round me, but my course is now in the track of the storm, and I shall set in gloom and desolation!"

There was something in the tone and imagery of this exclamation, and much likewise in the manner by which it was accompanied, that struck both upon the heart and the imagination of Shakspeare, and he could not help entertaining for the youth, what he had not experienced before, a feeling of sorrow and compassion. "Not so, my young friend," he exclaimed, looking upon him at the same time with an expression

of the utmost benevolence, "the clouds which now gather round your path, devious and erring as that path assuredly is, shall one day, I predict, and that too not a distant one, be dissipated. It is not in human character, it is not in human nature, that thoughts and feelings such as you have now given utterance to, should dwell with aught that is permanently or greatly wrong. No, to resume the imagery you have just called forth, like yonder beauteous luminary, who is sinking but to rise with renovated healing on his wings, you shall again be blessed and blessing. Suffer not then the sight of this lovely landscape, soothing and tranquil as should be its effect on every mind, to excite in your bosom emotions of such an opposite character!"

"It was not so once," returned the youth, in a voice almost stifled with anguish, and then, after a deep pause, suddenly conscious, as it were, of the agony he had betrayed, he seemed to shake off the load that oppressed him. "Do you mark, my friend," he continued, pointing down the valley, 'yonder distant turrets, that, touched as they are by the last rich crimson of the setting sun, seem to start from the wood

which envelopes them like points of glowing fire? Those turrets rise from Wyeburne Hall, the mansion of the Montchenseys, and beyond them, far as the eye can penetrate, and illumined by one bright gleam of light, you may yet just discern the village spire. Farewell! as I now appear to you, I must not be seen in this beloved valley — but we shall meet again. Your road," he then added, "winds down this steep descent, and through these groups of trees to the waters of the Wye, whose current you can just perceive from this great height, stealing through the bottom of the glen; it will lead you, after passing through a park, whose glades and antique oaks will remind you of your own delightful imaginings, where your exiles wander, and your fairies sport, to the very lawn which fronts the house; and now, once more adieu!" And as he said this he spurred his horse from the verge of the descent, whilst Shakspeare, who felt his interest for this young adventurer increasing every moment, called out to him to stop: he did stop, and as soon as they had again met, the bard asked to be entrusted with his name, and the means of future communication. "I feel most

honoured by, and grateful for the request," replied the youth, "and do promise that ere long you shall be better acquainted with my history and misfortunes; in the mean time you must be content to know me by the name of Roland the Freebooter; it is an appellation," he added with a smile, "that will excite more terror than satisfaction in those who hear it; but I have, nevertheless, been a leader of the lawless spirits whom you have encountered to-day, for good as well as evil;" and again he spurred his horse, and disappeared.

"There is something very extraordinary in all this," thought Shakspeare, as he mused for a few moments on the language and bearing of his late companion; but the necessity of attending to the security of his footsteps, (for both he and his servant had been obliged from the precipitancy of the path, to once more alight from their horses and lead them,) and the singular beauty of the scenery into which they were now descending, soon dissipated his abstraction.

It was a landscape, indeed, worthy of the pencil of a Claude, and was enjoyed by him who now wandered through its mazes, with all that

feeling and enthusiasm to which his unrivalled imagination may be conceived to have given birth. A glow of golden light, which gradually melted off into extensive fields of amber tint, or faintly yellow green, and then of sober gray, yet lingered in the west, and shed over the whole valley that warm, but soft and harmonising hue, which gives to evening scenery its most soothing and delicious effect. Every object was in repose, except that, at intervals, as the unfelt breeze just stirred the lightest leaves, was heard the murmur of remotely dashing water.

Their track was through a thick wood which clothed both sides of the glen from their base to their summit, occasionally, however, receding from the front of some very peculiar formations of projecting cliff, that shooting upwards in a shaft-like or columnar shape, and stained with every hue that moss and creeping plants could furnish, showed like the relics of some shattered temple or monastic fane. Glimpses of the Wye, softly flowing between banks of the greenest turf, were now caught more frequently as they pursued their downward course; the valley became wider, the road less precipitous, and the

poet was delighted by observing on the opposite and more level side of the stream, various openings, through which were discernible small patches or enclosures of corn, which, though springing up in situations so wood-girt and romantic as to look better fitted for the cell of the hermit than the sickle of the husbandman, gave a soft and pastoral air to all around.

They had now reached the bottom of the descent, where the Wye, taking a sudden bend to the left, poured its pellucid waters, with no little spirit and impetuosity, down a shelf of limestone rock, to pursue its sinuous course with augmenting beauty and serenity, through that still more expanded portion of the valley in which stood the mansion of the Montchenseys. And here Shakspeare, remounting his horse, paced gently onwards by the banks of the Wye, through scenery to which his powers of description could alone do ample justice. Twilight had by this time shed her sober tinting over every object; but the air was balmy and clear, and the evening star had risen. On either side of the stream greensward of the most delicate verdure, interspersed with single oaks, or groups

of ash and elm, rose gradually to a considerable extent, and before him, though yet obscurely seen in the distance, was part of the venerable front of Wyeburne Hall, screened by, and almost hidden indeed, in the depth of its surrounding woods.

Trusting, therefore, to the Wye, which had been represented to him as his best guide, the bard again willingly resigned himself to all those associations and trains of ideas which the uncommon fineness of the evening, and the peculiarities of the scene around him, were calculated to inspire; and it was not until the moon had silvered the walls of Wyeburne Hall, that he found himself at the foot of the lawn, or rather glade, that led gently ascending amidst an irregular line of trees to its very ancient but ample porch. Here, deserting the stream, which took a circuitous sweep once more to the left, to pass through the village situated about a mile behind the site of the manor-house, he soon reached the hospitable roof of his friends.

Montchensey and his daughter had been anxiously expecting him, and the latter had several times during the evening traversed the

lawn, and even skirted the banks of the Wye to a considerable distance, in the hope of seeing him approach; for as the day of his arrival had been previously arranged, they became apprehensive either that some accident had happened from the badness of the roads, or, that owing to the very secluded nature of their situation, he had mistaken his way. It was, consequently, with peculiar satisfaction that, as they were debating upon the propriety of sending out men and horses in search of the belated traveller, they heard Peter's voice, as he swung open the door with singular briskness and vigour, an achievement by the bye of no small difficulty, considering its size and ponderability, announcing the thrice welcome name of Shakspeare.

Few occurrences could have given more sincere pleasure to the inhabitants of Wyeburne Hall, than did the visit of our great dramatic bard; not only as affording them the means of discharging a debt of gratitude casually incurred, but as placing within the archives of their house one of those events of which, as long as human genius is held in due estimation, the noblest families on earth might be proud. Such, at

least, was the light in which the taste and enthusiasm of the Montchenseys, anticipating the verdict of posterity, led them to view the entrance of Shakspeare beneath their roof.

"Our poet found his friends, who flew to receive him with all that expression of mingled love and admiration which so remarkably distinguished their attention towards him when visitors at New-Place, in their great summer or withdrawing parlour, a room hung with exquisitely coloured tapestry, and lighted by two very large oriel or porch-like windows, commanding views of the home park, of the windings of the Wye, and of the village spire rising beyond a group of trees.

"And here it may be necessary to mention, before we proceed further with our narrative, that Wyeburne Hall was one of those old manor-houses which ranked midway between the embattled castle of the feudal baron, and the mere timber-built, or calimancoed mansion of the country squire. It had been originally constructed of sufficient strength to resist any hasty or tumultuous attack; but the first, or entrance court, together with its massy gateway, had been

removed, and the body of the fabric forming a square with an interior court, wa seen rising immediately from the most elevated portion of the surrounding park, which gradually dropped down on three sides to the banks of the Wye, whose stream taking a bold semi-circular sweep in its way to the village, was an object of life and beauty from almost every part of the mansion. It was built chiefly of brick with stone mouldings, had a lofty tower projecting in the centre of its front, and surmounting its porch, and four turrets, one at each corner of the entire quadrangle. The hall, into which you entered di rectly from the porch, was spacious, had an antique arched roof with sculptured wood of curious workmanship, and was adorned with eight figures of bucks carved in brown wood, and large as life, which were ranged at intervals along its sides. There were, also, on the ground floor of the principal front, beside the tapestried room which we have already mentioned, a library, a back parlour, and a banqueting or dining room, the latter being enriched with several fine pictures from the easel of Hans Holbein. At the upper end of the interior court,

or court of the fountains, as it was called, from two beautiful displays of this kind in its centre, and the lower part of whose sides consisted of open cloisters, was situated, in a direction immediately opposite the hall, a small chapel, elegantly finished in the florid Gothic style; and over the above-mentioned cloisters in each wing was a long gallery, that on the right being hung with a rich collection of family pictures, and above all a suite of chambers; the height, however, of the sides of the court being two stories lower than that of the principal front, whilst the chapel in altitude rose to a level with the entrance tower.

Such were the prominent features of the architectural arrangement of Wyeburne Hall, a fabric then more than two centuries old, and which, though it had undergone some slight internal changes and improvements, in accordance with the taste of the times, had not been violated exteriorly by the introduction of that incongruous mixture of Grecian and Gothic styles so common during the latter part of the sixteenth and commencement of the seventeenth century.

But, reverting to our story; after the first cordial salutations had passed between Shakspeare and his friends, the latter very naturally inquired into what had occasioned such unexpected delay in the arrival of their guest, mentioning, at the same time, how greatly their apprehensions had been excited lest any unforeseen accident should have detained him so much beyond the hour he had thought it probable he should reach them; in replying to which Shakspeare gave a full detail of his having, by mistake, passed through the valley of ———, and of his encounter there with Roland the freebooter

At the mention of this name he was surprised to observe the agitation into which Montchensey appeared to be thrown; and he could not help adding. "I am afraid, my friend, that your property, nay, perhaps your lives, may be endangered by the neighbourhood of this lawless adventurer and his wild associates."

"I cannot say," returned Montchensey, as soon as he had sufficiently recovered to speak with composure, "that in these respects *we* have lately had reason to complain; on the contrary, since this fellow, Roland, as he terms

himself, became the leader of the gang, now better than a year ago, this place has remained perfectly unmolested; nay, indeed, the village itself may look up to him as their protector from every species of depredation. But there is a mystery and pretension about this young man that, connected as they are with some circumstances which have lately occurred, very justly excite my apprehensions; and his conduct towards you this day, noble and praiseworthy as it is, and indicative of a lofty and cultivated spirit, only adds to my astonishment and suspicions."

"And have you made no representations to government," enquired Shakspeare, "relative to the existence and enormities of these desperadoes?"

"I know not that they absolutely merit the title which you have given them," returned Montchensey, "especially since Roland has assumed the direction of their affairs; for though we still occasionally hear of a wealthy or obnoxious neighbour having been disburthened by them of his purse, and even of his horse as he journeyed, yet he has nearly, if not altogether, succeeded in limiting their spoliations to the

contents of our forests and deer-parks. Mine, however, from some cause or other which I am anxious to learn, have been lately exempt from all levy of this arbitrary kind; and as the villagers, whose poultry and cattle used formerly to be laid under heavy contribution, now experience a similar forbearance, Roland has, not undeservedly, become a mighty favourite amongst them; and, indeed, if we except the lordly proprietors of venison, with the whole country side; for, though his irregularities are neither small nor infrequent, there is, I understand, a courtesy and gallantry in his bearing and demeanour to the lower orders which reconciles them to all his faults. In short, under the influence of their present chief, these outlaws, once remembered with dread and detestation, and against whom for more than ten years we had all been accustomed to go armed, have now become little other than Robin Hood's men; making free, it is true, with the out-door superfluities of the rich, but sparing at the same time, and even protecting, the poor. These circumstances, together with the conviction which repeated experience has brought home to us, that

all informations lodged against these marauders when even in their worst state, were carelessly received, and still more negligently acted upon, and consequently served but to render our situation still more hazardous, have induced us at present to remain, if not perfectly satisfied, at least altogether quiescent."

"And do you not know who this young adventurer is, or whence he comes?" asked the bard.

"I must confess," replied Montchensey, "that after all our enquiries, and they have been prosecuted with no little eagerness and pertinacity, we are still, as to these essential particulars, altogether in the dark; for the suspicions to which I just now alluded have been very recently formed, and seem, at present, even to myself, too improbable to justify communication. Indeed he is so seldom seen in the immediate neighbourhood of Wyeburne Hall, which, fortunately for us, he appears sedulously to shun, that almost he may be said to be *personally* unknown to us."

"Upon my word, my good friend," rejoined Shakspeare, "much as I have felt interested for

this youth, in consequence of his late courteous demeanour towards myself, your account has given fresh wings to my curiosity. And what does my fair Helen," he added, turning towards her, as she sate attentively listening, but with downcast eyes, to the conversation, "what does she think of this very singular character? May I not surmise, that however justly she may condemn the way of life to which he has attached himself, there is a feeling of sympathy and sorrow in her breast for one so generous and so brave, though yet so erring?"

"And would you not, my dear Sir," said Helen, blushing deeply as she spoke, and then suddenly becoming pale, "would you not have me pity one who, if we may judge from his conduct, has perhaps been driven to this extremity by unhappy and, it is possible, uncontrollable circumstances?"

"Marry, would I, my sweet girl," replied the poet, smiling; "for though I am no apologist of deeds incompatible with the rights of property, yet have I been much struck with this same Roland; there is a buoyancy of mind, and strength of character about him which pleases me much,

and it shall go hard but I will, ere long, with your leave and that of your father's, ascertain not only who he is, but what are his motives of action."

"I sincerely wish you may succeed," exclaimed Montchensey, with a thoughtful and perturbed brow; whilst on the countenance of Helen there sate an expression of timidity and pensiveness, which seemed to indicate an anxious and somewhat alarmed state of feeling.

The conversation, however, soon took a more lively if not a more interesting turn, and after many enquiries had been made concerning their Stratford friends, and a wish had been expressed by Helen that Mrs. Hall had accompanied her father, Shakspeare entered into an animated eulogium on the characteristic beauties of the country through which he had lately passed, describing the partial appearance of Wyeburne Hall, as it struck him in the rays of the setting sun, just previous to his descent into the valley, with all that warmth and enthusiasm, and richness of language, which absolutely paints what it strives to impress.

"A beam of satisfaction lighted up the fea-

tures of Montchensey as the picture came before him, glowing with all the fairy tints which Shakspeare knew to give it. "Yes, my friend," he exclaimed in allusion to a sentiment which had fallen from the poet, "I am indeed truly proud of Wyeburne Hall; it has been the seat of my ancestors ever since the conquest, and many a deed of worth and valour hath tradition treasured to their memory. But, alas!" he added, and a cloud of deep gloom came over him as he uttered it, "I am the last male descendant of my house. A storm at once overwhelming and unforeseen, hath strewed its honours on the ground, and I remain a lone and blighted tree, desolate and withering in the blast of heaven!"

"And can this lovely scion," said his guest, pointing to the weeping Helen, who had clasped her father's knees, "can she be overlooked?"

"Oh no, oh no," cried the afflicted parent, raising his fond child to his bosom, "I am much to blame; she is my only hope and stay, the very link to which my being clings; but even for her safety," and he shuddered whilst

he spoke it, "am I in continual apprehenison and the dread of losing her sometimes influences my mind as if the event had really happened. But I beg your pardon," he added, starting from his chair; "I take shame to myself for this unseasonable introduction of my domestic sorrows."

As he said this he rang for his servants, and assuming a more cheerful air, "Come, my friend," he exclaimed, leading the way at the same time to the banquetting-room, "let me obliterate my fault by declaring, that notwithstanding what you have just witnessed, never did I exercise the rites of hospitality at Wyeburne Hall with more sincere and heart-felt pleasure than on the present occasion."

They now sate down to a repast in the true Elizabethan style of plenty and good cheer. Montchensey forgot, or contrived to lull to rest, his numerous cares; Helen smiled again with her wonted sweetness and fascination, and, after an hour spent in delightful and unalloyed intercourse, Shakspeare retired to rest, his host marshalling him the way across the hall, and

up a massive flight of stairs, into a large and lofty chamber hung with arras, and situated immediately over the withdrawing-room.

Hither, in a few moments after Montchensey had wished his guest a good night, came the servant of the latter to unpack his master's wardrobe; but with a face so pale and troubled, and with such evident marks of trepidation in it, that Shakspeare, after gazing upon him for an instant or two, as the poor fellow stood trembling with a taper in his hand, called out, " In the name of wonder, John, what is the matter, for thou seemest to have lost the few senses which nature had been kind enough to spare thee?"

" Lord help me, Sir," he answered, looking around him with dismay, " Peter has been telling me such strange stories about this old house, that I am almost afraid to see my shadow in it. I had as lief a hundred times be fired at by those ill-looking fellows that bide in yonder rocks, than be way-laid by these same sprites and goblins, that can glide through a chink, and whisk through a key-hole. Do you know, Sir," he continued, getting up close to his master's

side, and speaking in an under tone, as if fearful of being overheard, "that this very wing in which we now stand, or at least a part on't, as they tell me, which runs backward by the side of an old court yonder, has been shut up, God knows how long, haunted, as they say, by the ghost of a former lady of the Hall, who came by her death in a way too horrible to tell. Just as the clock strikes twelve, Sir—"

"Prythee no more of thy nonsense," cried the bard, somewhat impatiently, "but make haste and put those things into the chest. Thou hast scarcely been more than two hours in the place, and thy head has been filled with all this trumpery!" "Please your honour, Sir, Peter declares ——" "Peter is an ass, and thou art little better," retorted his master, half smiling and half angry; "go, get thee gone, and try, if thou canst, to forget these idle stories."

"So," thought Shakspeare to himself, as his servant very reluctantly quitted the apartment, "if a man now were inclined for the indulgence of the sombre and mysterious, here might he find food for it; for, though I have ridiculed the credulity of this poor fellow, and perhaps

very considerately for his own sake, yet I cannot but acknowledge that, in conjunction with what I have already seen of the character of Montchensey, who seems to labour under the influence of some awful event which has occurred in his family, a tradition of this wild and gloomy cast is but too well calculated to make an impression even upon my own feelings."

It was shortly after these reflections had passed through the mind of Shakspeare, that he sought the blessings of repose; nor were they long denied to one who, though slightly tinctured with the superstition of the times, and therefore not unalloyed with some of the frailties incident to human nature, possessed a heart and intellect, in strength, and worth, and conscious innocence, not yet surpassed by any of the sons of men.

(To be continued.)

No. VIII.

Hear ye, who love to tear oblivion's veil
From the chill tomb, and strew fresh flowers around,
Where ancient sages slumber in the ground,
Come, join with me, and listen to the tale
Which bids neglected worth no more bewail
Her fate obscure.

SIR EGERTON BRYDGES.

THERE is a singular satisfaction in discovering that the place in which you have been many years resident, has, in days long past, given birth to some who have been eminent in their age for philosophy or literature, or arts, and more especially is this the case, if, in the vicissitudes of taste, and the progress of improvement, obscurity should have stolen over their memory and their name; for what can be more delightful than to rekindle a grateful recollection of those to whom their contemporaries have been indebted for hours of elegant amusement, or lessons of persuasive wisdom.

It is with a feeling of this kind that now, whilst the fervid heat of noon disposes to reflection and retirement, I sit down to record what, at this distant period, can be collected of the biography of two *once* celebrated poets, natives of Hadleigh, in Suffolk, WILLIAM ALABASTER, and JOSEPH BEAUMONT; the former highly eminent in his day for the depth of his erudition and the beauty of his latin verses, the latter for his theological attainments, and his vernacular poetry.

WILLIAM ALABASTER was born at Hadleigh, in Suffolk, in 1567. He received the first part of his education at the grammar school of his native town, then in considerable estimation for the talent with which it was conducted.* From

* Hadleigh school can also boast the honour of having educated that profound and accomplished scholar JOHN OVERALL, who preceded Alabaster by a few years, and went immediately from Hadleigh to St. John's College, Cambridge. He was afterwards chosen fellow of Trinity College, and in 1596 he took his degree of D.D. when he was appointed Regius Professor of Divinity, and Master of Catharine-hall in the same University. He became the successor of Dr Nowell as Dean of St. Pauls in 1601; and was chosen Prolocutor of the Lower House of Convocation towards the commencement of James's reign. His erudition and piety were rewarded in 1614,

the school of Hadleigh he was sent to that of Westminster, and from the latter to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he took the degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1587, that of Master of Arts in 1591, and in 1592 he was incorporated of the University of Oxford. During his residence at Trinity College, Cambridge, he appears to have obtained the patronage of Dr. Still, Margaret Professor, Master of the College, and Rector of Hadleigh, and subsequently bishop of Bath and Wells*; and Wood in his Athenæ

by the bishopric of Lichfield and Coventry, and by a translation to the see of Norwich in 1618, which he enjoyed, however, little more than a year, dying there May 12th, 1619.

Bishop Overall was the intimate friend and correspondent of Gerard Vossius and Grotius. He was styled by Camden "a prodigious learned man;" by Wood, "the best scholastic divine in the English nation," and Cosin, bishop of Durham, who erected a monument to his memory in Norwich Cathedral, terms him in the inscription which he placed upon it, "Vir undequaque doctissimus, et omni encomio major."

Overall was the author of the celebrated "Convocation Book;" he was also one of the translators of the Bible, and is mentioned by Mr. Churton, in his life of Nowell, as having written that part of the Church Catechism which includes the sacraments.

* The author of Gammer Gurton's Needle.

Oxonienses speaks of him as an ornament to that University, calling him " the rarest poet and Grecian that any one age or nation produced."*

It was probably about the period of 1596 or 1597, and when he had acquired no small celebrity as a classical poet, that he received from the Lord Keeper Egerton, the offer of the Rectory of Brettenham, in Suffolk, which he declined however, as not being equal to his expectations, accompanying the letter which he wrote on this occasion, with a copy of elegant Latin hexameters, addressed to his Lordship, who was then deservedly esteemed the Mæcenas of his age.†

The preferment, however, which he did accept at this period, was that of Chaplain to the Earl of Essex during his enterprise against Cadiz in 1597; on his return from which expedition he was unfortunately induced to desert the Church of England for that of Rome, an apostacy which was speedily rewarded by the confinement of a prison, for he sought to vindicate his change of opinion by a publication under

* Athenæ Oxon. Vol. i. Fast. 144.

† Todd's Spenser, Vol. i. p. ci.

the title of "Seven Motives for his Conversion," an attempt which was not easily pardoned in those days of polemical irritation. "Dr. Alabaster," says one of his adversaries on this occasion, "who published in 1598, by means of private conference with a certain seminary priest, whom in prison he laboured to convert, was by the same priest perverted, so that of a perfect protestant, hee is nowe become an absolute papist, and is for the same imprisoned."*

The controversy to which this defection gave rise, occupied his time for some years, and in 1604 brought upon him an antagonist of the first reputation in his day as a scholar and divine, Dr. William Bedell, afterwards bishop of Kilmore, who wrote an answer to a work which Alabaster had published in defence of his new tenets under the title of "Four Demands."†

* "A Booke of the Seven Planets, or Seven Wandring Motives of William Alabaster's wit, retrograded or removed by John Racster. Melius est claudicare in via quam currere extra viam. August, at London, printed by Peter Short, for Andrew Wise, dwelling in Paule's Church-yard, at the signe of the Angell, 1598. 4to. 47 leaves." - - Vide *British Bibliographer*, vol. i. p. 543.

† "Among the Lambeth manuscripts (No. 772.)," says Mr. Todd, "there is a valuable and curious work, entitled

Whether the arguments of bishop Bedell, or his own further researches, brought about his re-conversion, is not known; but shortly after this period, he discovered more *motives* for returning into the bosom of his mother-church, than he had ever done for quitting it.

Promotion rapidly followed his re-union with the protestant cause, for his talents both as a scholar and a theologian were too well known, and too highly estimated to be suffered to lie dormant for want of due encouragement. He accepted the rectory of Thorfield in Hertfordshire, was made a prebendary of St. Paul's, and, in 1614, a Doctor of Divinity. The sermon which he preached for his Doctor's degree, had for its text, the first verse of the first chapter of the first book of Chronicles, namely, "Adam, Seth, Enoch," and abounded in recondite and mystical learning.

' A Defence of the Answer to Mr. Alabaster's Four Demands against a Treatise intituled The Catholick's Reply upon Bedell's Answer to Mr. Alabaster's Four Demands.' The letter at the beginning is addressed ' to the Worshipful and my loveing friend Mr. Ambrose Jermyn;' and is dated, Bury, this 25th February, 1604, your Worshipp's in Christ Jesus, William Bedell ' " — TODD's *Spenser*, vol. i. p. ci.

After a life occupied to the last in literary and philosophical pursuits, Alabaster died in April, 1640, and in the 74th year of his age.

His works may be classed under the heads of *philology*, *theology*, and *poetry*. In the first of these departments, his "Lexicon Pentaglotton, Hebraicum, Chaldaicum, Syriacum, &c." Folio, London, 1637, may be considered as his chief production, and ranks, without doubt, as the most elaborate of all his publications. It had engaged his attention many years, and was received by the learned world with the admiration due to the industry and erudition with which it had been manifestly constructed.

As a divine, Alabaster, from the warmth of his imagination, and his love of the wonderful and mysterious, was too much addicted to the chimeras of the Cabala, which teach that there exists not word, letter, number or accent in the Mosaical law which has not some hidden meaning in it, and through which, if rightly interpreted, not only the genuine sense of Scripture may be clearly understood, but even the secrets of futurity unveiled; a doctrine which as Granger observes, "is admirably contrived to make the

scriptures speak any sense, or no sense at all."*

On this mystical plan of interpretation, he published in 1602, "Tractatus in Revelationem Christi modo Cabalistico explicatam," 4to.; and in 1621, "Tractatus de Bestia Apocaliptica," 12mo. Nor are any of his theological works, indeed, free from the same erudite enthusiasm; for a similar mode of interpretation may be traced in his "Apparatus in Revelationem Jesu Christi," 4to. 1607, and in his "Spiraculum Tubarum, n.d. Ecce Sponsus Venet," 4to. 1633.

The profound oriental learning, indeed, of Alabaster, together with the assumption of a faculty which could penetrate into, and unfold the dispensations of Providence to the remotest period of time, could not fail, in an age prone to the marvellous, to make a strong impression on the minds of his contemporaries. With what faith and admiration he was looked up to, as a person gifted, in this way, with very extraordinary powers, may be learnt from the following

* Biographical History of England, vol. ii. p. 169. edit of 1775.

lines addressed to him by his ingenious and accomplished friend Robert Herrick.

TO DOCTOR ALABASTER.

Nor art thou lesse esteem'd, that I have plac'd
(Amongst mine honour'd) Thee (almost) the last:
In great Processions many lead the way
To him, who is the triumph of the day,
As these have done to Thee, who art the one,
One only glory of a million,
In whom the spirit of the Gods doth dwell,
Firing thy soule, by which thou dost foretell
When this or that vast *Dinastæ* must fall
Down to a *Fillit* more *Imperiall*.
When this or that *Horne* shall be broke, and when
Others shall spring up in their place agen:
When times and seasons and all yeares must lie
Drown'd in the sea of wild Eternitie:
When the *Black Dooms-day Bookes* (as yet unseal'd)
Shall by the mighty *Angell* be revealed:
And when the Trumpet which thou late hast found
Shall call to judgment; tell us when the sound
Of this or that great Aprill day shall be,
And next the Gospell wee will credit thee:
Meane time like earth-wormes we will crawle below,
And wonder at Those Things that thou dost know.*

* Hesperides, or Works both Human and Divine, of Robert Herrick, Esq. 1648. p. 302.

Much, however, as Alabaster was latterly renowned for his theological and philosophical acquirements, he had enjoyed early in life, and continued to maintain to the day of his death, a reputation equally great and extensive for the critical acumen of his classical taste and the beauty of his Latin poetry. In 1592, and in the twenty-fifth year of his age, he wrote his "Roxana," a Latin tragedy, which was acted, as soon as finished, at Trinity College, Cambridge, and procured the author the most unbounded applause.* So highly, indeed, was this drama esteemed, that forty years after its first representation at Cambridge, namely in 1632, it issued from the press surreptitiously, and in a very imperfect form, an occurrence which stimulated the author to publish a genuine edition during the course of the same year.

The *Roxana* of Alabaster, though certainly a work of considerable merit, is written as Warton

* "Dr. Fuller informs us," (see his Worthies in Suffolk, p. 70.) says Granger, "that when his Latin tragedy of Roxana was acted at Trinity College in Cambridge, the last words 'sequar, sequar,' were so hideously pronounced, that a gentlewoman present fell distracted, and never afterwards recovered her senses."—*Biographical History*, vol. ii. p. 169. note.

justly observes, too much "in the style and manner of the turgid and unnatural Seneca;" but when that elegant and interesting commentator proceeds to say that this drama "has been mentioned by Dr. Johnson as a Latin composition, *equal* to the Latin poetry of Milton," * he has assuredly charged that upon his illustrious contemporary which he never dreamt of asserting. The passage in Johnson, with the preceding context, is as follows. "I once heard Mr. Hampton, the translator of Polybius, remark, what I think is true, that Milton was the first Englishman who, after the revival of letters, wrote Latin verses with classic elegance. If any exceptions can be made, they are very few: Haddon and Ascham, the pride of Elizabeth's reign, however they have succeeded in prose, no sooner attempt verse than they provoke derision. *If we produced any thing worthy of notice before the elegies of Milton, it was perhaps Alabaster's Roxana.*"† Now it will, I

* Milton's Smaller Poems, apud Warton, 2nd edit. 1791. p. 430.

† Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets, vol. i. p. 76. Sharpe's Edition.

think, be readily admitted, that no *equality* with the poetry of Milton could be intended by these words; they were meant merely to imply, what is, in fact, really the case, that this drama is, as a classical production, a spirited and extraordinary effort for the period in which it was written And more especially will this be allowed, when we recollect the youth of the writer, and that, as he has himself told us, it was the work of only a fortnight.

The drama, however, was not the only province of poetry in which Alabaster endeavoured to excel; he had projected, and in part executed, a species of Epic poem in honour of Elizabeth and her reign, which was to have extended to twelve books, and which he termed ELISEIS.

Of this elaborate undertaking which, notwithstanding the popularity of its subject, was never committed to the press, Mr. Todd, in his edition of Spenser, has given us the following account.

"The Eliseis," he says, "is preserved among the manuscripts in Emmanuel College, Cambridge; and is numbered 1 4. 16. I have been favoured by the master of that society with the

perusal of it. It is entitled *Elisæis, Apotheosis poetica, sive, De florentissimo imperio et rebus gestis augustissimæ et invictissimæ principis Elizabethæ D. G. Angliæ, Franciæ, et Hiberniæ, Reginæ.* POEMATIS *in duodecem libros tribuendi,* LIBER PRIMUS, *Authore* GULIELMO ALABASTRO, *Cantabrigiensi Colleg. Trin.* — It is dedicated to Queen Elizabeth.

The poem opens thus:

Virgineum mundi decus, augustamque Britannæ
Regnatricem aulæ, et lætis digesta tot annos
Imperiis, pacisque artes, bellique triumphos,
Ordior æternæ rerum transcribere famæ.
Argumentum ingens, &c.

This manuscript, according to Antony Wood, had been formerly in the possession of Theodore Flake." *

Unfinished as the poem was, it appears to have been widely circulated amongst the author's friends, and to have received from them the most unqualified approbation. It must have been commenced very shortly after the comple-

* Todd's Spenser, vol. viii. p. 24.

tion of the *Roxana;* for in 1595, when Spenser published his "Colin Clout's Come Home Again," he thus speaks of the production of his friend who was then in the twenty-seventh year of his age:

And there is Alabaster thoroughly taught
In all this skill, though knowen yet to few;
Yet, where he knowne to Cynthia as he ought,
His Elisëis would be redde anew.
Who lives that can match that heroick song,
Which he hath of that mightie Princesse made?
O dreaded Dread, do not thy selfe that wrong,
To let thy fame lie so in hidden shade:
But call it forth, O call him forth to thee,
To end thy glorie which he hath begun:
That, when he finish't hath as it should be,
No braver Poeme can be under sun.
Nor Po nor Tybur's swans so much renown'd,
Nor all the brood of Greece so highly praised.
Can match that Muse when it with bayes is crown'd,
And to the pitch of her perfection raised.

Praise like this, and from such a quarter, must necessarily have impressed the public mind with a high idea of the merits of the Elisëis, and it is, therefore, somewhat extraordinary, that,

although in an unfinished state, the eulogy of Spenser, and the curiosity which such a statement was so well calculated to excite, have not hitherto induced some lover of neglected genius to commit this fragment to the press. It has been mentioned, indeed, by Mr. Malone that, without doubt, Spenser's object in this highly-coloured encomium, was to recommend his friend to the queen's favour, and to procure him that promotion in the church, which he afterwards obtained. * Yet it cannot be conceived that without more than common merit in the poem itself, the author of the Fairy Queen would have risqued his reputation with his sovereign as a judge in calling her attention to it in so decided a manner.

Alabaster seems to have confined himself (as a disciple of the Muses) almost exclusively to the composition of Latin verses; for of his English poetry only two specimens have been found. These were discovered by Mr. Malone in the Bodleian library, in a manuscript of Archbishop Sancroft's, and present us with two son-

* Malone's Shakspeare, apud Boswell, vol. ii. p. 263.

nets, of which "the piety," as he has justly observed, "is more obvious than the poetry; yet Donne," he adds, "and those in that age who admired Donne, doubtless thought them excellent." Of the first of these sonnets, entitled "A New Year's Gift to my Saviour," I shall quote the major division or octant, as a curious instance of that fondness for a play of words or "dalliance with names," so prevalent in the reigns of Elizabeth and James the First.*

Ho! God be here. Is Christ, my Lord, at leisure?
Blessed St. Peter, to my King present
This *Alabaster* box which I have sent;
And if he ask how it may do him pleasure,
Tell him I hear that he hath endless treasure,
But hath not vessels half sufficient,
And in this box are many moe content,
Wherein of grace he may bestow large measure.

The account which has now been given of this once celebrated scholar, and which is, I believe, notwithstanding its brevity, much more full and particular than any preceding attempt, will show that he filled, during his lifetime, a

* Vide Malone's Shakspeare, ap. Boswell, vol. ii. p. 262.

large space in the public eye, and that he was deservedly esteemed, as well for the depth and variety of his erudition, as for the elegance of his classical acquirements. It is the record, however, of an individual who unhappily trusted not his fame to his native language, and who has, therefore, only been preserved from oblivion by the casual notice of his contemporaries, and the occasional retrospect of the learned critic. He is, in fact, alone remembered as

The Bard of other days, whom Herrick loved,
Whom Spenser honour'd, and whom Johnson praised. *

From these scanty notices of one who has appeared and departed like a shadow of times long gone by, let us now turn our attention to a bard whose works will afford us a more interesting field for criticism and illustration.

* There is an excellent engraving of our poet by Payne, from a portrait by Cornelius Jansen, with the following inscription; " GULIELMUS ALABASTER, anno ætatis suæ 66, studii arcanæ theologiæ, 33."

No. IX.

Intent to rescue some neglected rhyme,
Lone-blooming, from the mournful waste of time,
And cull each scatter'd sweet.

BOWLES.

JOSEPH BEAUMONT, the author of Psyche, an Allegorical Epic, and of a collection of minor poems, was born at Hadleigh, in Suffolk, on the 13th of March, 1615. His father descended from a younger branch of the ancient family of Beaumont in Leicestershire, and who died in 1653, had been for many years a woollen manufacturer in Hadleigh, then a very wealthy trading corporation; and being a man not only in easy circumstances, but of great respectability, he had been repeatedly elected into the office of chief magistrate of that town. Very fortunately, also, for the subject of our biography, he possessed, together with a deep sense of religion, a very decided taste for elegant liter-

nature; and discovering in the early years of his son Joseph a peculiar attachment to letters, he very wisely determined to give him an education corresponding to the promise which his talents seemed to hold forth.

Much, however, as he prized the acquisitions of learning, and anxious as he was that his son, who was the favourite of his hopes, should have every advantage which the age could bestow, he was still more solicitous that these accomplishments should be based on the firm foundation of morality and religion. Apprehensive, therefore, of sending him to such a distance as would entirely remove him from his own immediate influence and inspection, he refused to listen to the suggestions of his friends, who had proposed Westminster as the primary seat of his education, but placed him at the grammar school of his native town, very justly concluding that the discipline which had nursed and produced such scholars as *Overall* and *Alabaster*, was not likely to disappoint his expectations. In fact, young Beaumont prosecuted his studies, whilst resident at this school, with so much assiduity and success, as to render himself, in a very extraor-

dinary degree for his age, familiar with the best writers of antiquity. *Terence* was his favourite author, and it is said that of this elegant classic he had ever a small edition in his pocket to the close of his life.

The proficiency thus early acquired, enabled him to enter Peterhouse in Cambridge in his sixteenth year; and here the same love of classical learning which had so greatly distinguished him whilst a student in Hadleigh, continued to recommend him to the notice and esteem, not only of the members of his own society, but of the university at large. Nor had his disposition and conduct an inferior claim to their kindness and respect; for he was open and unaffected in his manners, strictly observant of the statutes and regulations of his college, and remarkable no less for the sweetness of his temper, than for the fervor and regularity of his devotional piety.

Qualifications such as these very speedily attracted the attention of Dr. Cosins, then master of Peterhouse, and subsequently bishop of Durham, and who was distinguished for his minute observance of the character and deportment of the students committed to his care. He singled

out Mr. Beaumont indeed as an object of his peculiar patronage, and as soon as he had obtained his bachelor's degree, he gave him the first fellowship in his college that became vacant.

It was now that he found himself at liberty to carry into execution the plan of study which he had some time before chalked out as his favourite pursuit; that of familiarising himself with the scriptures of the Old Testament in their native language. For this purpose he commenced, in his twenty-first year, the study of the Hebrew, comparing with the utmost diligence and exactness every version extant with the original, a task which at his time of life has been seldom undertaken, and, if undertaken, as seldom prosecuted with effect. After this appeal to the pure source of religion, he proceeded to read with critical accuracy the primitive writers on Christianity, abstracting and methodising their contents in the most lucid order, and exhibiting strong proofs of the taste and discrimination with which in particular he had digested the learning of *Basil*, and the free and fervid eloquence of *Chrysostom*.

Having employed three years in these im-

portant pursuits, he was called, at the age of twenty-four, to the tutorship of his college, a charge which he sustained with the most exemplary vigilance and impartiality, yet with a sweetness and affability of temper that won for him the hearts of all entrusted to his care. If at any time he assumed the aspect of severity, or the language of reproach, it was in consequence of some instance of immorality or irreligion; for we are told that being "himself assiduous and fervent in paying public homage to the Deity in the college chapel, he had always a strict eye upon the behaviour of his pupils in those sacred offices, and whatever marks of negligence or indevotion he observed in any of them, were sure to be followed by the strongest expressions of his displeasure and indignation: for he looked upon the want of reverence and gratitude to the Author of our life, as a testimony of a base and bad heart; and thought it impossible, that he, who could knowingly fail in these duties to that beneficent Being, could ever be a useful member of society, or a good man."*

* Account of his Life prefixed to his Minor Poems, p. x

It was also one of the especial cares of Mr. Beaumont, in the lectures which he regularly delivered to his pupils, to impress upon their minds the deepest love and veneration for their king and country; and he used to speak of it as one of the most pleasing recollections of his life, that in the days of anarchy and rebellion which shortly afterwards occurred, not an individual of the numerous young men who had been placed under his direction, and many of them belonged to some of the best families in the kingdom, hesitated to embrace with cheerfulness and alacrity, and at the immediate risk of life and property, the cause of royalty and the established constitution.

An office of greater weight and publicity now fell to the lot of Mr. Beaumont, being chosen Vice-Proctor or Moderator in the University, the duties of which situation he discharged with more than common zeal and effect, enforcing, as far as his delegated authority extended, a strict and general observance of the statutes. But his residence at Cambridge, and the benefit resulting from his influence and example, were about to receive a long and fearful interruption;

for the storm was now gathering which very shortly afterwards broke with irresistible fury upon the civil and ecclesiastical constitution of the kingdom; and in 1644, when the Scotch army declared for the parliament, and had commissioned the Earl of Manchester to re-model the University of Cambridge. the tutor of Peterhouse, who was well known for his firm adherence to the cause of his sovereign, was the first to feel the weight of their resentment. He was, in fact, compelled to quit the University, then under the control of the rebels, and being ejected from his fellowship, he retired to his native town of Hadleigh; and here we are told, "he formed a little society of *gallant spirits, men of abused merits*, which chiefly consisted of some of his former pupils, and the sons of his great friend and patron Bishop Wren;" and here also, "being in deacon's orders, he constantly performed the daily services of the liturgy in his father's house, and preached to his little flock every Sunday."

It was whilst resident at Hadleigh that he employed his leisure hours in the composition of his elaborate allegorical poem entitled

"Psyche, or Love's Mystery, displaying the Intercourse between Christ and the Soul," which was commenced in April 1647, and though, in its first edition, consisting of twenty long cantos, was completed before the 13th of March following, and published early in 1648. Nor was this production, extensive as it is, the only fruits of his retirement in Suffolk; numerous miscellaneous poems, both English and Latin, though not published until many years after his death, issued from his pen whilst lingering on the banks of the Brett, his native stream. Indeed nearly all his poetry appears to have been written between the years 1644 and 1653.

Scarcely had our author completed his Psyche, when he was induced to leave Hadleigh by an invitation from Dr. Wren, Bishop of Ely, to reside in his house as his domestic chaplain. This prelate, as visitor of Peterhouse, had long known and admired the worth and the talents of Mr. Beaumont, and had, as early as the year 1643, collated him to the rectory of Kelshall in Hertfordshire; to that of Elm with the chapel of Emneth in 1646, and to the seventh

canonry and prebend in the Cathedral church of Ely in 1647. But as these preferments, which occurred during the rebellion, would be considered as little more than nominal, the Bishop was anxious to give him an asylum in his own family; and so affectionately did he become attached to him, in consequence of this domiciliation, that in the year 1650 he bestowed upon him in marriage his step-daughter, Miss Brownrigg, a young lady of the most pleasing manners and amiable disposition, and who was possessed of a considerable estate together with, the manor of Tatingston in Suffolk; and with her at Tatingston-place, in the mutual endearments of domestic society, in the occasional exercise of his professional duties, and in the daily practice of every Christian charity, he passed the succeeding ten years, and, perhaps, the happiest period, of his life.

The Restoration, as might be imagined, almost instantly drew Mr. Beaumont forth from his retreat; and not only did he take immediate possession of the benefices to which he had been formerly presented by his great patron Bishop Wren, but he was also admitted into the first

list of his majesty's chaplains, and created D.D. by a royal mandamus in 1660.

In the ensuing year, at the particular request of Bishop Wren, who wished to have two persons whom he so highly valued, near him, our author and his lady were induced to remove to Ely, and took possession of the Prebendal house; but unfortunately the situation disagreed so much with Mrs. Beaumont, who was of a delicate constitution, and had a tendency to consumption in her frame, that when in April 1662, on the resignation of Dr. Pearson, master of Jesus' college, Cambridge, the Bishop had appointed Dr. Beaumont his successor, Mrs. Beaumont was become too weak to bear the fatigue of removal, and expired at Ely on the 31st of the following month, leaving a family of six very young children. This severe stroke, whilst it was borne by her sorrowing husband with the resignation of a Christian, was deeply and irreparably felt as a man; for he had lost one who had been his support under every distress, and who had never welcomed prosperity, but as he was a sharer with her in it.

With his little family he now removed to

Cambridge, where on the decease of Dr. Hale, master of Peterhouse, in 1663 he was presented by his kind patron to the headship of that college, a situation which of all others he had most desired, and in which, indeed, he acquired the love and veneration of all within the influence of his authority; for he lost no opportunity of rewarding merit, especially when labouring under the disadvantages of obscure birth or confined circumstances; and so revolting, in fact, to his benevolent heart was the spectacle of learning and piety suffering under the pressure of want or cold neglect, that whenever such an instance occurred in the society over which he presided, he immediately hastened to alleviate it, by admitting the person or persons so circumstanced into his family, under the denomination of his sizars, where, until they took their Bachelor's degree, he supplied them not only with the necessaries, but the comforts of life, allowing them free access to his library, and not seldom to the still greater benefits resulting from his conversation and advice.

Preferment still followed the footsteps of our learned divine. In the year of his admission to

the mastership of Peterhouse, he was instituted to the rectory of Feversham, near Cambridge; and in 1664 to that of Barley, in Hertfordshire, where he alternately resided, we are told, in the vacation months every summer, "feeding the indigent, instructing the ignorant, and faithfully discharging all the offices of the pastoral charge."

The ensuing year saw him involved in a controversy with Dr. Henry More, who, having broached some doctrines in his "Mystery of Godliness," which our author deemed not only subversive of our excellent constitution, but injurious to the cause of Christianity, he privately communicated his objections to the Doctor, who thinking proper to reply through the medium of the press, compelled Dr. Beaumont to have recourse to the same public vehicle, and so effectually did he refute the positions of his antagonist, that he received the thanks of the university for his services in behalf of religion.

The reputation, indeed, of Dr. Beaumont, for the depth and soundness of his theological knowledge, had now become so great, that in the year 1670, without any solicitation on his

part, or any competition on that of others, he was called, by the united voice of the university, to fill the divinity chair, and in this very important situation he passed the residue of his life, a period of twenty-nine years, delivering lectures regularly twice a week in every term; in the course of which he went through the two Epistles to the Romans and Colossians, in order to set at rest the numerous heresies and controversies which had arisen from a mistaken interpretation of them.

The success which had attended his efforts in this arduous attempt at Cambridge, led to his appointment in 1689, as one of the commissioners for the comprehension, as it was termed, or the union of churchmen and dissenters under one form of public worship, but not entertaining any expectation that such a plan could be carried into effect, he declined taking his place at the board.

Blessed with an uncommon share of health and strength, he continued to discharge all the duties of his office, even to his eighty-fourth year, with an unbroken spirit; but, relying too much, at length, on the vigour of his constitu-

tion, he exerted himself with such energy in preaching in his turn before the university on the 5th of November 1699, as to bring on, after the service of the day was concluded, symptoms of alarming debility. These ushered in at night a high fever, which being followed in a few days by an attack of the gout in his stomach, he expired on the 23d of the same month.

"Thus," says the friendly memorialist of his life, with whose summary of his character I cannot do better than close this brief sketch; "thus, after a life full of as much virtue and reputation as ever fell to the share of one man, died the great and excellent Professor BEAUMONT; regretted by all good men, and the whole university; but most of all by the members of that society over which he had so long, and so worthily presided; who lost in him the guide of their lives, the director of their studies, the witness and encourager of their virtues.

"He was religious without bigotry, devout without superstition, learned without pedantry, judicious without censoriousness, eloquent without vanity, charitable without ostentation, generous without profusion, friendly without dis-

simulation, courteous without flattery, prudent without cunning, and humble without meanness. In short, whoever shall hereafter deserve the reputation of having filled with credit the several stations which he so eminently adorned, will have reason to believe full justice done to his character, if for learning, piety, judgment, humanity, and good breeding, it may be thought worthy to be compared with that of Dr. BEAUMONT."*

Of the numerous works of Dr. Beaumont, with the exception of his "Observations upon the Apology of Dr. Henry More," none have issued from the press but his *Psyche*, and his *Minor Poems*; an injunction having been found in his will against the publication of his critical and polemical writings.

Psyche, as we have already related, was written during the author's residence at Hadleigh in 1647, and published in 1648, in twenty cantos;

* Highly-coloured as this character of our author may be deemed, it seems to be borne out by the opinion of his contemporaries; for in his epitaph in the antichapel at Peter-house he is styled "Poeta, Orator, Theologus præstantissimus; quovis nomine Hæreticorum Malleus, et Veritatis Vindex."

and a second edition with the poet's last corrections, and augmented by him to twenty-four cantos, appeared in 1702, under the superintendence of his son, the Rev. Charles Beaumont.

This bulky folio, the laudable design of which "is to recommend the practice of piety and morality, by describing the most remarkable passages of our Saviour's life, and by painting particular virtues and vices in their proper colours," has now, notwithstanding the admiration which it once excited, dropped into entire oblivion; a fate which, though the most deplorable that can happen to a poet, cannot, in this instance, I apprehend, when the work is viewed *as a whole*, be pronounced altogether undeserved.

Dr. Beaumont, in fact, brought to his undertaking a large share of learning, and an inexhaustible fund of wit and fancy; but, unhappily, very little either of judgment or of taste to regulate and controul them. The result, therefore, has been, that whilst the former is too often obtrusive and misplaced, the latter is licentious and extravagant to a degree of which there are not many examples even in the records of poetry.

Nor is the general tenor of his language frequently less exceptionable, than the forced imagery and concetti of which it is so often the vehicle; for its quaintness and familiarity are, not seldom, such as to throw upon what was intended to be grave, or awful, or majestic, a truly ludicrous and fantastic air.

With defects such as these, it was totally impossible that a theme so hallowed and sublime as our author had chosen, could be successfully treated; and, in fact, throughout the whole poem, the dignity and simplicity of the scriptural record are, in almost every instance, violated. Yet with this great general failure, there are nevertheless dispersed through the volume many phrases, lines, and short passages of considerable beauty, and which, therefore, are entitled to a rescue from the utter and merited neglect into which the vast body of the poem has fallen.

A work, indeed, so circumstanced as the *Psyche* of Beaumont has been for more than a century, must have furnished to the curious enquirer into scarce and forgotten poetry, many a tempting opportunity for selection and transplantation; and accordingly it is recorded of

Pope, that, on being asked his opinion of *Psyche* in a private conversation, he declared, "*there are in it a great many flowers well worth gathering, and a man who has the art of stealing wisely will find his account in reading it.*"*

It shall be the business, therefore, of the remainder of my present paper, to cull a few of these flowers, reserving a notice of the minor and posthumous poems of our bard to a future number.

The descriptive powers of Dr. Beaumont were certainly great, and, had he known how to have placed the reins on his imagination, and to have selected his objects with a just discrimination as to their adaption to the purposes of poetry, they would undoubtedly have appeared to great advantage. Almost beyond number, indeed, are the pictures which might be drawn from his *Psyche*; but they are, in general, clogged with a multitude of insignificant features, and, consequently, want that boldness, simplicity, and relief, so indicatory of a master's hand. Some there are, however, which may

* Minor Poems, Life prefixed, p. xxii.

claim a better character, and amongst these I would place the following description of the Seasons:

That storm blown o'er, the *Spring* march'd forth
    array'd
With fragrant green, whose sweet embroidery
In blooms and buds of virgin smiles display'd
A scene of living joys, all echoed by
  Ten thousand birds, which, perch'd on every tree,
  Tun'd their soft pipes to Nature's harmony.

Summer came next, with her own riches crown'd,
A wreath of flowers upon her goodly head,
Large sheaves of ripen'd gold did her surround,
And all her way with wholesome plenty spread;
  Where, as she went, no tree but reach'd his arm,
  (For it was hot) to shade her head from harm.

Then follow'd *Autumn*, with her bosom full
Of every fruit which either tempts the eye
Or charms the taste; here Wantoness might cull,
And weary grow: here wide-mouth'd Luxury
  Might her own boulimy devour with more
  Facility, than spend this teeming store.

At last came drooping *Winter* slowly on,
For frost hung heavy on his heels; the year
Languish'd in him, and looked old and wan:
He quak'd and shiver'd through his triple fur.
Canto iv.

In the same canto, and not far distant from the above passage, occurs a delineation of the Paradise of the Poets, a part of which, including characters of Homer, Pindar, and Theocritus, Virgil, Horace, and Ovid, Tasso and Spenser, I shall present to my readers.

There on the shore a singing troop appear'd,
Where *Pindar* and his lute their parts did play;
All ears were ravished which his numbers heard;
And had not *Flaccus* thrown his fear away,
And fir'd by envious bravery, stretch'd his skill,
Lyric's sole sovereign *Pindar* had been still.

High on deserved mountain *Homer* sate,
And sham'd a trumpet by his stouter laies;
Which Fame, who thither flutter'd, having got,
Spread through the wondering world their only praise:
Till princely *Maro* with an equal strain
Embrac'd his voice, and echoed them again.

These at the second bound reflected be
By *Tasso*'s Musé, but in a purer tune:
The Muse which taught her sober Tuscany
The Greek and Roman poetry to prune,
And rescu'd Godfrey from Oblivion's bands,
As he had Salem freed from Pagan hands.*

Not far from whom, though in a lower clime
Yet with a goodly train doth *Colin* sweep:
Though manacled in thick and peevish rhyme,
A decent pace his painful verse doth keep:
Right fairly drest were his well-featur'd *Queen*,
Did not her mask too much her beauties screen.

* We have another eulogy on Godfrey and Tasso, expressed with great energy and poetical spirit, in the following stanzas of the seventeenth canto.

Right *Christian Hero*, O how due to Thee
Was sacred *Salem*'s crown, and more than this!
How justly wears thy pious *victory*
Both martial and poetic laurel's dress;
Whilst thy illustrious name and glory reigns,
Both in the world's applause, and *Tasso's strains*?

Those *strains* in which thy heightened valour takes
Not *Salem* only, but *Eternity*,
In which with louder life thy trumpet speaks,
Because blown by a *Muse* whose blast can fly
Beyond *Judea*'s bounds, and nobly dares
Alarm the admiration of all ears.

Some distance thence, in flow'ry wanton groves
Luxurious Amorosos sate, who by
The thrilling keys of sports, and smiles, and loves,
Effeminated their quaint melody.
Nimble *Theocritus* and *Naso* were
The leading lords of all that revell'd there.

The close of all was an affected throng
Which chirp'd, pip'd, crackled, squeak'd, and buzz'd about;
Mushrooms of Verse: who yet as boldly sung
As *Homer*'s self, and desperately thought
Their *Sonnets' crack* a noise as gallant made
As did the *thunder* of an *Iliad*.

It is impossible to pass by this group of poets without remarking that justice is by no means done to the character of *Spenser*, whose admirable versification is grossly misrepresented by the epithets, *painful*, *thick*, and *peevish*. Nor is *Theocritus* under any point of view properly associated with *Ovid*; the former being justly valued for his simplicity, and adherence to nature, whilst the latter is too often florid, verbose, and artificial. In every other respect the passage has considerable merit.

There is occasionally a luxury and splendour of description in this long and elaborate poem which appears to have been struck out, as it were, at a heat, by the fortuitous collision of some rare and etherial particles; and of this class the picture I am about to give of a tyrannical and ambitious monarch, will, I have no doubt, be esteemed an adequate example.

There sate the "*Conqueror*;" one whole diamond
made
His radiant helmet; and in wanton pride
A gorgeous flood of plumes about it play'd,
Yet scorn'd the kiss of any wind; aside
They wav'd their heads and coyly seem'd to say,
To every blast, your breath offends; away.

A stately mantle's large expansion reach'd
Down from his wide-spread shoulders to his feet,
And cloth'd him with all splendors that are fetch'd
From eastern shores the western pearls to meet:

His sword look'd lightning through its crystal
sheath,
Whose round hilt crowned its victorious blade;
His mighty sceptre, circled with a wreath
Of bloody bays, right dreadfully he sway'd.

Before him, on a golden pillar, at
Whose massy foot a palm and laurel grew,
Upon the back of *Triumph*, *Glory* sate;
From whose full robes more dazzling lustre flew
Than breaks from *Phœbus'* furniture, when he
Through *Cancer* rides in *June's* high gallantry.

A few lines subsequent to this brilliant passage, occurs a stanza which, from the moral and political truth it conveys, deserves to be written in letters of gold; and I am happy to add, that both the versification and the expression are such as to do justice to the subject.

When did a realm of slaves unto their Prince
The trusty sweetness of Love's homage pay?
When did a Tyrant with safe confidence
Rely upon his vassals? "None but they
Can fairly rule, and fairly ruled be,
Whom freedom's bonds tie up in Monarchy.

Canto v.

In canto the sixth, the poet, as introductory to a description of the deep sleep which fell upon Adam previous to the creation of Eve, places before us the Cave of Sleep, to which

power he feigns Pity had been sent by the Deity to command her immediate influence over the faculties of our first parent. A part of this allegorical painting, as possessed of no inconsiderable richness of imagination, I shall now offer to my readers. Pity is represented as "starting through the earth,"

Down to the silent mouth of that dark cave
Where sorrows find their sink, and cares their
grave.

A lazy moat the grot incompassed
With waters which were never known to stir;
Upon whose bank secure Oblivion's bed
Was made of sluggish moss and caked fur;
Bats, owls, and other purblind birds of night
Stole through the swarthy shades their doubtful
flight.

Mandrakes within the moat, and poppy grew,
Which nodded to their neighb'ring plump of trees:
Those were the willow, cypress, box, and yew;
Close at whose feet lay *Quietness* and *Ease*;
Whilst from the water crept an heavy cloud
Of dusky vapours.

Through these pass'd Pity to a door of jet,
Whose wary ringle round was cloth'd in wool;
The porter *Silence* ——

There found she on a bed of ebony
Sleep laid at length, in soft security:
Close by her couch's side dropp'd pipes of lead,
A swarm of bees were humming at her head.

In the sleep which entrances Adam, the poet supposes him to enjoy a dream emblematic of what is about to take place; and, as a portion of the stanzas appropriated to this delineation, exhibits a fair specimen of the harmony of versification to be *occasionally* found in *Psyche*, I feel it as a debt due to the author, to attract attention towards its structure. No sooner then had Adam sunk beneath the kindly influence,

When lo, a goodly tree salutes his eye,
Tall, wide, and full of florid majesty.

The woods look'd all that way, and bow'd their
head;
Low crept the shrubs and due obeisance made;
The plants and flowers their fragrant duties did,
Ambitious to be gilded by this shade:

Thus happy he in glory's zenith reigns,
King of the hills, the vales, the woods, the plains.

But from his own brave stock, out at his side,
A twig sprung up which grew as fair as he:
As high it reach'd its head, its arms as wide,
And flourished with equal gallantry:
Their leaves all kiss'd, their arms embrac'd each other,
They liv'd, and lov'd, and joy'd, and reign'd together.

At the close of Canto the sixth occurs a passage to which it is possible Milton may have been indebted; for we are told by the Editor of the second edition of Psyche, that the principal difference between the impression of 1648 and that of 1702, consists in the supply of a new Canto, the sixteenth, and in three of the former Cantos being each divided into two parts. Milton, we know, was deeply read in the works of his predecessors, and there are certainly several lines and phrases scattered through the pages of Psyche which remind us of something similar in the Paradise Lost. The passage before us, however, is by far the most striking and direct:

the bard of Psyche is describing the temptation of Eve, at the close of which he tells us,

> She the *Applt* took,
> When lo, with paroxysms of strange dismay
> Th' amazed Heavens stood still, Earth's basis shook,
> The troubled Ocean roar'd, the startled Air
> In hollow groans profoundly breath'd its fear.

If these lines be, as I presume they are, in the first edition of Psyche, they must inevitably have attracted the notice and the admiration of our great poet, who has availed himself of them, when recording the first fatal trespass, in a manner corresponding with the characteristic sublimity of his genius.

> She pluck'd, she eat!
> Earth felt the wound; and Nature from her seat
> Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe,
> That all was lost.

And again, when Adam yields to the temptation of his wife:

> Earth trembled from her entrails, as again
> In pangs; and Nature gave a second groan:

Sky lour'd; and, muttering thunder, some sad drops
Wept at completing of the mortal sin
Original.

In the seventh Canto of Psyche, which commences the history of our Saviour's life, the adoration of the three kings or magi forms a prominent part; and the address of these personages to the infant Jesus, is drawn up by our author with a propriety, energy, and simplicity, which, had they been found more frequently interspersed through his pages, would have rendered the subject of my criticism an invaluable acquisition.

Having thrice prostrated themselves at the feet of Jesus, the elder of the magi, ere he offers his oblations, exclaims, in behalf of himself and his brethren,

The foolish world surnames us *wise*; but we
No more will that ambitious title own;
Which truly due, and suiting none but Thee,
Before thy footstool here we throw it down:
  The name of *King* has flatter'd us a while,
  But we resign to Thee that fitter stile.

That *King* art Thou; the hopes of whose dear birth
Have many fainting generations cheer'd:
That *Jacob's Star* whose rising here on earth
The shades and types of prophecies hath clear'd;
Displaying to this grovelling world, which lay
Till now in darkness, a meridian day.

That sovereign *Wisdom*, which contriv'dst at first
The fabric of this universal *Ball*:
By thy direction it from *Nothing* burst;
And in thy counsels boundless circle all
Motions of heaven and earth still acted be:
Both *Change* and *Chance* are *Certainties* to Thee.

We have already had a beautiful description of the Cave of Sleep, and in the following stanzas, at the commencement of the eighth Canto, our author enumerates in a highly pleasing and poetical manner, the peculiar gratifications which flow to man from this gentlest of the blessings of his being, provided all be at peace within his breast. Addressing Nature, he says,

When *Man* has travell'd with his hand, or mind,
For this both toils and sweats, as well as that,
Thou in a tender misty vail dost bind
His heavy head, and teach his eyes to shut

Out grief and pain, that, so reposed, he
May hugg'd in *Sleep's* all-downy bosom be.

Yet other creatures little find in *sleep*
But that dull pleasure of a gloomy rest,
Which they themselves perceive not when they reap:
Man by this fuller privilege is blest,
That *sleep* itself can be awake to him,
And entertain him with some courteous dream.

In this soft calm, when all alone the heart
Walks through the shades of its own silent breast,
Heaven takes delight to meet it, and impart
Those blessed visions which surpass the best
Of waking eyes. —

And he then very truly adds, in reference to the moral state of the mind,

The sweetest sleep is possible upon
A cold and churlish couch of board or stone.

'Tis not the flatt'ry of fine things without,
Which can with genuine softness clothe thy rest;
Down proves but precious thorns, and silk doth flout
His hopes of quiet sleep, whose treacherous breast,
Though with external unguents sleek, within
Is harsh and rugged, being lined with sin.

The honest ploughman in the simple straw
Which furnish'd his first board, and now his bed,
Reaps solid savoury rest, and steeps his brow
In deepest ease: whilst though the tyrant's head
Be laid in delicacy's softest lap,
By gnawing fears and cares 'tis ploughed up.

The canto from which the above extract is taken, contains a long detail of the fears and the cruelties of Herod, when he finds that the Wise Men have deceived him, and return no more. The apprehensions of the tyrant are painted in very strong and bold colours, and the following passage in particular, and more especially the concluding stanza, may be pronounced worthy of preservation, as well for the vigour and beauty of the language, as for the strength and propriety of the imagery.

Dark dreadful fancies, and self-thwarting cares
Worried his breast, and chased sleep from his eyes:
For up he starts, his grisly beard he tears,
And round about his chamber cursing flies:
He cursed himself, and heaven, and all its stars,
But chiefly that which pointed out his fears.

And he then exclaims, in an agony of baffled cunning and malice,

See, now! how well thy credulous courtesy
Repayed is; those kings the news have spread
Through all the regions of wide Araby;
Which join'd in zeal's bold league, have made an
head
To tear "thee from" thy throne:

Methinks I smell the battle drawing near,
And *vengeance* aiming at my careless brain;
Methinks the thunder of their arms I hear,
And see the lightning flashing on the plain;
Loud in mine ears, methinks, the name doth ring,
The shouted name, of *Israel's new-born King*.

The reception, also, which the soul of Herod meets on approaching the regions of everlasting punishment, is conceived in the boldest spirit of sacred poesy:

Lo, at his coming, lo, th' infernal pit
Was moved; where every damned prince arose
From his sulphureous throne of pangs, and met
This more deserving tyrant.

The *love of life*, and *dread of death*, so strongly impressed on the heart of man, have been a frequent theme both for the philosopher and the poet; yet, powerfully and repeatedly as the workings of this instinct have been described, there are not many pictures on the subject which, for strength and distinctness of colouring, can surpass what I have now to produce from Psyche. I must confess, however, that the stanzas are selected from a considerable number on the same topic of a very inferior cast.

The buried *captive*, whose dark dungeon is
His antidated and his sadder grave,
Though banish'd thus from vital happiness,
Yet hugs his *life* as dearly, as the brave
And free'st gallant who his lust can please
With all the fat of pleasure and of ease.'

The *leper*, clothed in his winding sheet
By his disease, abhors the thought of *death*
Life still is ev'n in his dead body sweet;
And full as precious he reputes his breath
As lovely virgins, whose fair feature's dress
Of native roses, and of lilies is.

The lamentable *galley-slave*, who fast
Is chained to perpetual misery,
Still toils and rows against the tempest's blast
Without all hopes that any port can be
  His hav'n of rest; yet holds that *life* full dear
  Which only makes his bondage persevere.

Thus all the gall that sharpest misery
Into the heart of *mortal life* can pour,
Meets there such resolute powers of suavity
As conquers all its bitterness.

Tear what you will from man besides, and he
Will stoutly set his shoulders to sustain
The loss; but if his *life* attacked be,
In vain all comforts fawn on him; in vain
  Are crowns and sceptres proffer'd him, a price
  Too poor to hire him to his *obsequies*.

Canto xiv.

From among the almost innumerable lessons of wisdom and morality which are profusely scattered through this long and elaborate poem, I wish to cull forth one which shall afford the reader a specimen of the energy and simplicity both of thought and diction which occasionally, though I am grieved to say but rarely, add force

and interest to the intrinsic value of the precept. The author is expatiating on the inestimable advantages of *discipline* and *industry*, and after instancing some of their noblest results, he exclaims,

How lovely shine these bright examples which,
Invite our study into honour's way!
What tongue would grudge in its sublimest pitch
Of strained art, to consecrate a lay
  Of praise to them? and why should we admire
  What yet we dare not venture to desire?

Ease, ease alone's the rust of that brave metal
Which strengthens noble spirits for virtue's battel.

No pains so painful are to those who know
Their soul's activity, as *lazy rest*:
And on my foes, might I free curses throw,
My worst should be, what Drones esteem the best:
  No imprecations would I shoot, but this;
  And damn them to no Hell but *Idleness*.

Canto xx.

It is seldom that our poet, when he has occasion to introduce the agency of Satan, which, from the nature of his subject, he is often ob-

liged to do, can escape exhibiting the ludicrous or the horribly grotesque. But in the following lines, which describe the flight of that Evil Spirit from Heaven, into which he had momentarily intruded himself under the guise of an Angel of Light, there is a portion of Miltonic force and grandeur.

As down through Heaven he rush'd he proudly
 threw
Scorn on the stars which he could not p... ess ;
Then through the air imperiously he flew,
And by his looks proclaim'd that realm was his.

His swarthy wings lash'd that soft element
With violent speed, and made it roar aloud ;
No wind did ever with such furious bent
Or hideous noise, through those mild regions croud ;
 No bolt of thunder ever rent its path
 With such precipitant tumultuous wrath.

Canto xxii

Further on in the same canto we meet with a very striking description of the martyrdom of *Uranius*, the guardian and companion of Psyche, in composing which there can be little doubt

but that our author must have had in his recollection the fate of Rowland Taylor, who, whilst Rector of Hadleigh, in the reign of Queen Mary, perished at the stake, within half a mile of the spot where the poet was writing, a martyr in the cause of protestantism. The lines will apply with the happiest truth and precision to this memorable instance of triumphant faith and piety.

Then with a brand
The pile they kindle, and blow up the flame.

But mild *Uranius* having kiss'd the stake,
And every faggot which his lips could reach,
At leisure was his noble prayers to make
For pardon for his murderers' fury, which
  Blinded with superstition's veil, alas!
  Perceived not what part it acting was.

Thence purer than the flame, and brighter far,
Which mounted from his pile, his *soul* did fly;
It higher flew than that, and gain'd the sphere
Not of the *stars*, but of *felicity*;
  Where it was welcomed to its final home
  By Martyrdom's illustrious diadem.

Go, valiant *Saint*, thy conquest is complete;
Go where immortal laurel ready is
With endless honor thy bright brows to meet;
Go, and possess thy *Master's* realm of bliss:
  Thy name and fame shall reverend be beneath
  So long as *Piety* on earth shall breathe.

To these longer passages I shall now beg leave to attach a few single stanzas of great beauty, and which are, indeed, an almost sufficient reward for the toil of wading through the folio in which they have been locked up. What, for instance, can be more just and impressive than the following picture of piety?

O how imperious is *Meek Piety*,
Whether it will or no, commanding all
Spectators into love and reverence! He
Who at true honor reacheth, must let fall
  His other plumes, and wisely learn to dress
  Body and soul in humble holiness.

Canto x.

And, again, it is said of Psyche, in a strain alike exquisite for the nobleness of the sentiment and the poetry of the diction,

Abroad, she counted but her prison; *Home*,
Home was the region of her liberty.
Abroad diversion throng'd, and left no room
For zeal's set task, and virtue's business free:
Home was her less incumber'd scene, though there
Angels and *God* she knew spectators were.
Canto xviii.

But, perhaps, there is not a passage in the volume which for splendor of language and brilliancy of versification, can vie with the subsequent four lines. The poet is representing the guard of soldiers trembling with terror at the miraculous circumstances which take place at the sepulchre of Jesus on the morning of his resurrection, amongst which, as the most appalling to them, he particularly notices the appearance of the angelic visitor:

But chiefly at the *Angel's presence* they
Were overwhelmed in a flood of fright;
His robes were glorious as the morning's ray,
And partners with the driven snow in white.*
Canto xv.

* As a striking proof of the strange want of taste, and ludicrous familiarity of language which are to be found not only

It is altogether needless to point out to my readers the perfect beauty of the third and fourth lines of this quotation, for they are not to be exceeded by the most polished specimens of modern versification.

Instances of this kind, indeed, surrounded as they usually are in the volume before us by a mass of very inferior materials, strike the eye like a flash of lightning amidst midnight darkness, and excite, perhaps, from the power of contrast, a higher degree of admiration than, in any other situation, they would probably produce. Yet I think it will be allowed that the sublimity of the stanza I am now about to produce, can require no relief from this or any other source, to effect a very powerful impression on

in every canto, but in every page of this long poem, I shall subjoin, in this note, the couplet which immediately follows the fine passage in my text, and which closes, indeed, the st-

For 'twas his *Easter suit*, the suit he had
To honour th *bright feas.* on purpose made.

Nothing more than this instance can be required to show what sifting and selection are necessary in quoting from the Psyche of Dr. Beaumont.

the mind, and with it I shall conclude this series of extracts.

God, God alone is *King of Nature;* and
His *Voice* the fountain was whence first she sprung.
And ever since hath been the rule whereby
She steers her loyal course. That *Voice* which rung
So loud as to awake *Vacuity*
Into a full and mighty world.

Canto x.

I have now brought forward what will, I think, fully establish the assertion of Pope, that there are in the Psyche of Dr. Beaumont "a great many flowers well worth gathering." I have sought far and near, indeed, for these flowers, and amidst a wilderness of strange and monstrous growth; but they are such, if I do not deceive myself, as will, for beauty and rarity, amply compensate the trouble which attended the research. That there are others which might be collected by going over the same ground, I will not attempt to deny; but I may venture to affirm, from a rapid glance whilst passing, that, in freshness and distinctness of

colouring, they will be found far inferior to those which form the present *bouquet*.

Dropping the metaphor, however, I shall now place before my readers, with the view of exhibiting the variety which has been aimed at in selecting them, a table of the arrangement and the titles of the specimens which have been produced. They will be found to have been given in the following order:— 1. The Seasons. 2. The Paradise of the Poets. 3. The Tyrant. 4. The Free Monarchy. 5. The Cave of Sleep. 6. Adam's Dream. 7. The Transgression of Eve. 8. The Adoration of the Magi. 9. The Blessings of Sleep. 10. Herod in Fear, and in Hades. 11. The Love of Life. 12. The Praise of Industry. 13. The Flight of Satan. 14. The Martyrdom. 15. Piety. 16. Domestic Virtue 17. The Angel at the Tomb of Jesus. 18. The Voice of God.

The catalogue, short as it is, will sufficiently prove that Dr. Beaumont possessed a vigorous and a plastic imagination; and were we to form an estimate of his powers from these insulated extracts, he might be considered as entitled to take a high rank among the poets of his country.

How greatly is it to be lamented, then, that when the volume whence these passages have been drawn is once opened, the allotment must vanish like a dream, and we are compelled to behold in almost every page the most revolting violations of simplicity and taste! I have endeavoured, however, as far as may lie in my power, that all shall not perish through want of discrimination; and when I shall have added in another number, a few gems from the minor poems, I trust I shall be deemed to have done some little service to the poetical memory of this almost forgotten bard of Hadleigh.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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